

A Saint Indeed :

O R,

The great work of a Christian
Opened and Pressed ;
from Prov. 4. 23.

B E I N G

A seasonable and proper expedient
for the recovery of the much decayed
Power of Godliness among the
Professors of these Times.

By John Flavell M. of the Gospel.

*Unusquisque a deo constitutus est sui cordis tanquam
castris custos & defensor contra suos hostes : Si
ergo non implorato auxilio, non expectato suc-
cursu, adeo ad primam obsidionis castrametati-
nem castrum tradat hosti crimen admittit prodi-
tionis manifestum : quid igitur dicendum de tra-
ditione clavium huius castris, antequam obsidione
prematur ? clavis est cogitatio, hac enim cor
aperit ; cogitationem volvere est clavem cordis
ad apertionem ipsius torquere, ut tandem resera-
tur. Ames. de Conscien. p. 154.*

L O N D O N,

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The Epistle Dedicatory.

To my dearly beloved and longed for,
the Flock of Jesus Christ in *Dartmouth*,
over whom the Holy Ghost hath made
me an Overseer: sound Judgement,
true Zeal, and unstained Purity is heart-
ily wished.

My Dear Friends,

Here are three sad sights with
which our eyes should continually
affect our hearts. The
(1.) Is to behold in every
place, so many prophane and
dissolute ones who bear the very image of Sa-
tan; the face of whose conversation plainly
discovers what they are, and whither they are
going, Phillip. 3. 18, 19. These look like them-
selves, the children of wrath: The (2.) is to
see so many cursed hypocrites artificially disgui-
sing themselves, and with marvellous dexteri-
ty acting the parts of Saints; so that even a ju-
dicious eye may sometimes mistake the Simular
workings of the Spirit on them, for the
A 2 having

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saving working on others : to hear such a person conferring, praying, bewailing his corruptions, and talking of his experiences ; would easily persuade a man to believe, that he hath the heart as well as the face of a sincere Christian : For

Sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat.

So the people of God do speak, so they pray, and even so they open their conditions : these look like Saints, but are none. The (3) is to see so many real Saints in whom the Spirit of truth is, who get through the impetuous workings of their corruptions, and neglecting of the watch over their hearts, do often fall into such scandalous practices, that they look like Hypocrites, though they are not so.

These are three sad sights indeed, and Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep abundantly over them all !

For the first I would mourn heartily, considering that they (so continuing) must be damned eternally, 2 Thess. 1. 8. 9. 1 Cor. 6. 9.

For the second, I would both weep and tremble, considering that they (so abiding) must be damned doubly, Matth. 24. 51.

And for the third, no less than any of the rest, because though they themselves may and shall be saved, yet their examples make fast the

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the bond of death upon both the former;
Mat. 18. 7. 2 Sam. 12, 13, 14.

Alas! that ever they should shed the blood of others souls, for whom Christ shed his own blood! that ever they should be cruel to others, who have found Christ so kind to them! I know they dare not do it directly and intentionally, but so it proves occasionally and eventually. Suffer me here to digress a little, and expostulate with these prejudiced and hardened Souls, I will presently return to you again. O why do you mischief your own Souls by other mens examples? because they stumble and break their shins, will you fall and break your necks? I desire all such as harden themselves by these things, and take up a good opinion of their own deplorable condition, would soberly consider and answer these three Queries.

1. Qu. Dost Religion any way countenance or patronize the sinful practices of its Professors, or doth it not rather impartially and severely condemn them? It is the Glory of the Christian Religion that it is pure and undefiled, James 1. 27. no Doctrine so holy, Psal. 19. 8. nor doth any make more provision for an holy life, Titus 2. 11, 12. Indeed there is a case wherein we may charge the evil practices of men upon their Principles, but that is when their practices naturally flow

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from, and necessarily follows their principles : as for example, if I see a Papist sin boldly, I may charge it upon his principles, for they set pardons to sale, and so make way for looseness. If I see an Arminian slight the grace of God, and proudly advance himself, I may cry shame upon his principles, which directly lead to it; but can I do so where such practices are condemned and provided against by their own avowed principles which commit them?

2. Q. Is it not a most irrational thing to let fly at religion because of the scandalous wayes of some, whilst in the mean time you wholly slight and overlook the holy and heavenly conversations of many others? Are all that profess Godliness loose and careless in their lives? No, some are an ornament to their profession, and the glory of Christ: and why must the innocent be condemned with the guilty? why the eleven for one Judas?

3. Q. If you condemn Religion because of the scandalous lives of some that profess it: must you not then cast off all Religion in the world, and turn down right Atheists? surely this is the consequent of it: for what religion is there, but some that profess it walk contrary to that their profession: and then as Constantine told the Novatian, you must set up your Ladder and go to Heaven by your self.

But

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But alas! it is not our printed Apologies for Religion, but the visible reformations of its Professors that must both salve its honour, and remove those fatal stumbling blocks at which the blind world strikes and falls into eternal perdition.

Now there are two ways by which this may be effected. First, by convincing the consciences of Professors of their miscarriages, and the evil and aggravations of them. Secondly, by medicating the heart, and cleansing the fountain whence they proceed: in the first of these, a worthy and eminent servant of Christ hath lately laboured, holding a clear Gospel-glass before the faces of Professors, which truly represents their spots and blemishes. If he that reads it, will consider, apply, and practise it, shall doubtless turn to his Salvation, but if it turn to no good account to him that reads it: I know it shall turn to a testimony for him that wrote it. The second is a principal design of this small Treatise, the subject whereof is exceeding weighty, and of daily use to the people of God, though the manner of handling it be attended with many defects and weaknesses: every one cannot be excellent who yet may be useful.

I will exercise your patience no longer than whilst I tell you,

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1. *Why I published it to the view of the World.*

2. *Why I direct it particularly to you.*

First for the publication of it, take this sincere and brief account, that as I was led to this subject by a special providence, so to the publication of it by a kind of necessity: the providence at first leading me to it was this: A dear and choice friend of my intimate acquaintance being under much inward trouble upon the account of some special heart-disorder, opened the case to me, and earnestly requested some rules and helps in that particular, whilst I was bending my thoughts to that special case, divers other cases of like importance (some of which were dependent upon that consideration) occurred to my thoughts and this Scripture which I have insisted upon, presented it self, as a fit foundation for the whole discourse, which being lengthened out to what you see, divers friends requested me to transcribe for their use, divers of the cases here handled: and some others, begg'd me to publish the whole, to which I was in a manner necessitated to save the pains of transcribing, which to me is a very tedious and tiresome work: and just as I had almost finished the Copy, an opportunity presented (and that somewhat strangely) to make it publick, So that from first to last I have been carried

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ried beyond my first intentions in this thing.

Ob. If any say, the world is even cloyed with Books, and therefore though the discourse be necessary, yet the publication is needless.

Sol. 1. I answer, there are multitudes of Books indeed, and of them many concern not themselves about root truths, and practical godliness, but spend their strength upon impracticable notions, and frivolous controversies: many also strike at root-truths, and endeavour to undermine the power of Godliness: and some there are that nourish the root, and tend to clear and confirm, to prepare and apply the great truths of the Gospel that they may be bread for souls to live and feed on: now, though I could wish that those that have handled the pen of the Scribe, had better employed their time and pains than to obtrude such useless discourses upon the world, yet for Books of the latter rank, I say, that when Husbandmen complain of too much corn, let Christians complain of too many such Books.

2. And if you be so highly conceited of your own furniture and ability, that such Books are needless to you: if you let them alone they will do you no hurt and other poor hungry souls will be glad of them, and bless God for what you despise and leave.

Ob. If it be said that several in the cases here handled touch not your condition: I answer,

Sol. 1.

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Sol. 1. That which is not your condition may be anothers condition. If you be placed in an easie, full and prosperous state, and so have no need of the helps here offered to support your heart under pinching wants, others are forced to live by faith for every dayes provision: If you be dandled upon the knee of providence, some of your brethren are under its feet. If you have inward peace and tranquility of Spirit, and so need not the Counsels here given to ward off those desperate conclusions that poor afflicted souls are ready to draw upon themselves at such a time; yet it may be a word in season to them, and they may say as David to Abigail, blessed be thou of the Lord, and blessed be thy advice.:

2. That may be your condition shortly, which is not your condition for present: say not thy Mountain stands strong, thou shalt never be moved: there are changes in the right hand of the Most High, and then those truths which are little more esteemed than Hedge-fruits, will be as Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver: In Jer. 10. 11. The Prophet there teaches the Jewes (who then dwelt in their own houses) how to defend their Religion in Babylon, and what they should say to the Chaldeans there, and therefore that verse is written in Caldee. So much for the reasons of its publication: Next for
the

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the Dedication of it to you : I was induced thereto by the consideration, (1.) Of the relation I have to you above all the people in the world : I look upon my gifts as yours, my time as yours, and all the Talents I am entrusted with as yours : It is not with you as with a Woman whose Husband is dead, and so is freed from the Law of her Husband, the relation still continues, and so do all the mutual duties of it. (2.) By the consideration of my necessitated absence from you, I would not that personal absence should by insensible degrees, untwist (as usually it doth) the cord of friendship, and therefore have endeavoured (as absent friends use to do) to preserve and strengthen it by this small remembrance. It was Vespasian's answer to Apollonius when he desired access for two Philosophers : My Doors (said Vespasian) are alwayes open to Philosophers, but my very breast is open to thee : I cannot say with him, my doors are open for the free access of friends, being by a sad providence shut against my self ; But this I can say, my very breast is still open to you, you are as dear to me as ever. (3.) Another inducement (and indeed the main) was the perpetual usefulness and necessity of these truths for you, which you will have continual need of : and know I few of you have such happy memories to retain, and I cannot be alwayes

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ways wish you to inculcate these things, but *litera scripta manet*; I was willing to leave this wish you as a Legacy, as a Testimony of sincere love for, and care over you: This may counsel and direct you when I cannot, I may be rendred useles to you by a civil or natural Death; but this will out-live me, and Oh that it may serve your souls when I am silent in the dust!

To hasten now to a conclusion, I have only these three requests to you, which I earnestly beseech you not to deny me; Yea, I charge you, as ever you hope to appear with comfort before the great Shepherd, do not dare to slight these requests. (1.) Above all other studies in the world, study your own hearts: waste not a minute more of your precious time about frivolous and sapless controversies; it is reported even of Bellarmine (how truly

I examine not) quod à studiis scholasticæ theologiæ aversaretur ferè nauseabundus, quoniam succo carebant liquidæ pietatis, (i. e.) he turned with loathing from the study of School-Divinity because it wanted

the sweet juice of Piety: I had rather it should be said of you, as one said of Swinkfeldius (He wanted

Caput regulatum illi defuit, cor bonum non defuit.

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ed a regular head, but not an honest heart;) then that you should have regular heads, and irregular hearts: My dear flock, I have according to the grace given me, laboured in the course of my Ministry among you, to feed you with the heart-strengthening bread of Practical Doctrine, and I assure you, it is far better you should have the sweet and saving impressions of Gospel-Truths, feelingly, and powerfully conveyed to your hearts; then only to understand them by a bare ratiocination, or a dry syllogistical inference: Leave trifling studies to such as have time lying on their hands, and know not how to employ it: Remember you are at the door of Eternity, and have other work to do, those hours you spend upon heart-work in your closets, are the golden spots of all your time, and will have the sweetest influence into your last hour: Never forget those Sermons I preached to you, upon that subject; from 2 Kings 20. 2, 3. Heart-work is weighty and difficult work, an error there may cost you your souls: I may say of it, as Augustine speaks of the Doctrine of the Trinity, Nihilò facilius aut periculosius erratur, a man can erre in nothing more easily or more dangerously: O then, study your hearts. (2.) My next request is, that you will carefully look to your Conversations, and be accurate in all your
ways

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Wayes, hold forth the word of life: be sure by the strictness and holiness of your lives, to settle your selves in the very consciences of your enemies. Remember that your lives must be produced in the great day, to judge the world, 1 Cor. 6. 2. Oh then what manner of persons ought you to be! You have many eyes over you, the Omniscient eye of God, that searches the heart and reins, Rev. 2. 23. The vigilant eye of Satan, Job 1. 7, 8. The envious eyes of enemies, that curiously observe you, Psal. 5. 8. The quick and observant eye of Conscience, which none of your actions escape, Rom. 9. 1.

Oh then be precise and accurate in all manner of conversation; keep up the power of Godliness in your Closets and Families, and then you will not let it fall in your more publick employments and converses in the world: I have often told you, that it is the honour of the Gospel, that it makes the best Parents and Children; the best Masters and Servants; the best Husbands and Wives in the World.

My third and last request is, that you pray for me: I hope I can say, and am sure some of you have acknowledged, that I came at first among you, as the return and answer of your Prayers: And indeed so it should be, see Luke 10. 2. I am perswaded also, I have

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have been carried on in my work by your prayers; 'tis sweet when 'tis so, see Ephel. 6. 18. 19. And I hope by your prayers to receive yet a further benefit, even that which is mentioned, Heb. 13. 18, 19. Philem. 22. And truly it is but equal you should pray for me, I have often prayed for you: Let the Pulpit, Family and Closet witness for me: And God forbid I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.

Yea, friends, your own interest may persuade to it; what mercies you obtain for me, redound to your own advantage, if God preserve me, it is for your use and service; the more gifts and graces a minister hath, the better for them that shall wait on his Ministry; the more God gives in to me, the more I shall be able to give out to you. I will detain you no longer, but to entreat you to accept this small testification of my great love and have recourse to it, according as the exigencies of your condition shall require: Read it consideringly, and obediently; Judge it not by the dress and stile, but by the weight and favour of what you read. 'Tis a good Rule of Bernard, in legendis libris, non queramus scientiam sed saporem (i. e.) in reading Books, regard not so much the science, as the favour: That it may prove
the

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*the favour of life unto life to you, and all those
into whose hands it shall come, is the hearty
desire of*

Your loving and
faithful Pastor,

JOHN FLAVEL.

*From my Study at
Ley in Slapton,
Octob. 7. 1667.*

A



Prov. 4. 23.

*Keep thy Heart with all diligence, for
out of it are the issues of Life.*

THe *Heart* of Man is his worst part before it be Regenerate, and the best afterwards: It is the seat of Principles, and fountain of Actions. The eye of God is, and the eye of the Christian ought to be principally fixed upon it.

The greatest difficulty in Conversion is to win the heart to God, and the greatest difficulty after Conversion is to keep the heart with God. Here lies the very pinch and stress of Religion; here's that that makes the way to life a narrow way, and the Gate of Heaven a strait Gate. Direction and help in this great work, is the scope and sum of this Text, wherein we have,

1. An Exhortation, *Keep thy heart with all diligence.*

2. The reason or Motive inforcing it, *For out of it are the issues of Life.*

In the Exhortation I shall consider.

B

1. The

I. The Matter of the Duty.

II. The manner of performing it.

I. The Matter of the Duty; *Keep thy Heart.* Heart is not here taken properly for that noble part of the body which Philosophers call the *primum vivens*, & *ultimum moriens*; the first that lives, and the last that dies; but by Heart in a Metaphor, the Scripture sometimes understands some particular noble faculty of the Soul, in *Rom. 1. 21.* it is put for the understanding part, their foolish Heart, (*i. e.*) *their foolish understanding was darkened.* And *Psal. 119. 11.* It is put for the memory, *Thy word have I hid in my Heart.* And *1 John 3. 10.* It is put for the Conscience, which hath in it both the light of the Understanding, and the recognitions of the Memory: if our Heart Condemn us; (*i. e.*) if our Conscience; whose proper office it is to condemn. But here we are to take it more generally for the whole Soul, or inner Man; for look what the heart is to the Body, that the Soul is to the Man: and what health is to the Heart, that Holiness is to the Soul: *Quod sanitas in corpore, & sanctitas in corde.* The state of the whole body depends upon the soundness and vigour of the Heart, and the everlasting state of the whole

whole man upon the good or ill condition of the Soul.

And by keeping the Heart, understand the *diligent* and *constant* use and improvement of all holy Means and Duties, to preserve the Soul from sin, and maintain its sweet and free communion with God.

* *Levatur* in *loc.* will have

the word taken from a besieged Garrison begirt by many enemies without, and in danger of being betray'd by treacherous Citizens within, in which danger the Souldiers upon pain of death are commanded to watch; and whereas the expression, (*Keep thy heart*) seems to put it upon us as our work yet it doth not imply a sufficiency or ability in us to do it; we are as able to stop the Sun in it's course, or make^a the Rivers run backwards, as by our own skill and power to rule

and order our hearts: we may as well be our our own *Saviours*, as our own *Keepers*, and yet *Solomon* speaks properly

* I say constant, for the reason added in the Text, extends the duty to all the states and conditions of a Christians life, and makes it bind *ad semper*: If the heart must be kept because out of it are the issues of life, then as long as these issues of life do flow out of it, we are obliged to keep it.

perly enough, when he saith, *Keep thy Heart*, because the Duty is ours, though the power be Gods. A natural Man hath no power, a gracious man hath some, though not sufficient, and that power he hath, depends upon the exciting and assisting strength of Christ; *Gratia gratiam postulat*, Grace within us is beholding to Grace without us, *John 15. 5. Without me ye can do nothing.* So much of the matter of the Duty.

2. The manner of performing it, is *with all diligence*; the Hebrew is very Emphatical *שמר שומר* *cum omni custodia*, *Keep with all keeping, q. d. keep, keep*; set double guards, your hearts will be gone else: And this vehemency of expression with which the Duty is urged, plainly implies how difficult it is to keep our hearts, and how dangerous to let them go.

3. The Reason or Motive quickening to this Duty is very forcible and weighty, *For out of it are the issues of life.* That is, it is the Source and Fountain of all vital actions and operations; *Hinc fons boni & peccandi origo*, saith *Jerom*; it is the Spring and Original both of good and evil; as the spring in a Watch that sets all the wheels in motion. The Heart is the Treasury, the Hand and Tongue but the

The Doctrine Propounded. 3

the Shops, what is in these come from thence; the hand and tongue alwayes begin whete the heart ends. The Heart contrives and the Members execute, *Luke 6. 46. A good Man out of the good treasury of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasury of his heart bringeth forth evil things; for out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaketh.* So then, if the heart erre in its work, these must needs miscarry in theirs; for Heart-errours are like the errours of the first concoction which cannot be rectified afterwards: Or like the mis-placing and inverting of the Ramps and letters in the Press which must needs cause so many Errata's in all the Copies that are printed off. Oh then! how important a Duty is that which is contained in the following Proposition?

Doct. That the keeping and right managing of the heart in every condition, is the great business of a Christians life.

What the Philosopher saith of Waters, is as properly applicable to hearts, *suīs terminis difficile continentur*; 'tis hard to keep them within any bounds: God hath set bounds and limits to them, yet how frequently do they transgress, not only the bounds of Grace and Religion, but

6 *What it is to keep the Heart.*

even of Reason and common Honesty : *Hic labor hoc opus est*, this is that which affords the Christian matter of labour, fear and trembling to his dying day. 'Tis not the cleansing of the hand that makes a Christian, for many a Hypocrite can shew as fair a hand as he, but the purifying, watching, and right ordering of the heart, this is the thing that provokes so many sad complaints, and costs so many deep groans and brinish tears. 'Twas the pride of *Hezekiah's* heart that made him lie in the dust mourning before the Lord, *2 Chron.* 32. 26. 'Twas the fear of Hypocrisie invading the heart, that made *David* cry, *Let my heart be sound in thy Statutes, that I be not ashamed*, *Psal.* 119. 80. 'Twas the sad experience he had of the Divisions and Distractions of his own Heart in the service of God, that made him pour out that Prayer, *Psal.* 86. 11. *Unite my Heart to fear thy Name.*

The method in which I shall improve the Point, shall be this :

1. First, I shall inquire what the keeping of the Heart supposes and imports.
2. Secondly, Assign divers Reasons, why Christians must make this the great work and business of their lives.
3. Thirdly, Point at those special seasons

sons which especially call for this diligence in keeping the Heart.

4. Fourthly and lastly, apply the whole in several uses.

1. What the keeping of the Heart supposes and imports;

To keep the heart necessarily supposes a previous work of Sanctification; which hath set the Heart right by giving it a new spiritual bent and inclination; for as long as the Heart is *not set right* by Grace, as to its habitual frame, no Duties or Means can *keep it right* with God. Self is the Poise of the unsanctified Heart, which Byasses and moves it in all its designs and actions; and as long as it is so, it is impossible that any external means should keep it with God.

Man by Creation was of one constant uniform, frame and tenour of Spirit, held one streight and even course; not one thought or faculty ravel'd or disorder'd, his mind had a perfect illumination to understand and know the will of God, his will a perfect compliance therewith; his sensitive appetite and other inferiour powers, stood in a most obedient subordination.

Man by degeneration is become a most disordered and rebellious Creature,

8 *What it is to keep the Heart.*

contesting with, and opposing his Maker, as the *first cause*, by self-dependance; as the *chiefest good*, by self-love; as the *Highest Lord*, by self-will; and as the *last end*, by self-seeking: and so is quite disordered, and all his acts irregular: His illuminated understanding is clouded with ignorance, his complying will, full of Rebellion and Stubbornness; his subordinate powers, casting off the dominion and government of the superiour faculties.

But by Regeneration, this disordered Soul is set right again; Sanctification being the rectifying, and due framing, or as the Scripture phrases it, the renovation of the Soul after the Image of God, *Eph. 4. 24.* in which, *self-dependance* is removed by Faith; *self-love*, by the love of God; *self-will*, by subjection and obedience to the will of God; and *self-seeking*, by self-denial. The darkened understanding is again illuminated, *Ephes. 1. 18.* the refractory will sweetly subdu'd, *Psal. 110. 3.* the rebellious appetite, or concupiscence, gradually conquer'd, *Rom. 6. 7. per tot.* And thus the Soul which sin had universally depraved, is again by Grace restored and rectified.

This being presupposed, it will not be difficult to apprehend, what it is to keep
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What it is to keep the Heart. 9

the Heart, which is nothing else but the constant care and diligence of such a renewed man, to preserve his Soul in that holy Frame to which Grace hath reduced it, and daily strives to hold it.

For though Grace hath in great measure rectified the Soul, and given it an habitual and heavenly temper; yet sin often actually discomposes it again, so that even a gracious heart is like a Musical instrument, which though it be never so exactly tuned, a small matter brings it out of tune again; yea, hang it aside but a little, and it will need setting again, before you can play another Lesson on it: even so stands the case with gracious hearts; if they are in frame in one duty, yet how dull, dead and disordered when they come to another: and therefore every duty needs a particular preparation of the heart, *Job. 11. 13. If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thy hands towards him:* Well then, to keep the Heart, is carefully to preserve it from sin which disorders it; and maintain that spiritual and gracious frame which fits it for a life of communion with God: and this includes these six acts in it.

1. First, frequent observation of the frame of the Heart, turning in and examining

I ○ *What it is to keep the Heart.*

mining how the case stands with it, this is one part of the work. Carnal and formal persons take no heed to this, they cannot be brought to confer with their own hearts, there are some men and women that have lived forty or fifty yeares in the world, and have scarce had one hours discourse with their own hearts all that while: 'tis an hard thing to bring a man and himself together upon such an account; but Saints know those Soliloquies and self-conferences to be of excellent use and advantage. The Heathen could say, *anima sedendo & quiescendo fit sapiens*; the Soul is made wise by sitting still in quietness; though Bankrupts care not to look into their Books of accompt; yet upright hearts will know whether they go backward or forward, *Psal. 77. 6. I commune with mine own heart.* The heart can never be kept, untill its case be examined and understood.

2. It includes deep Humiliations for Heart-evils and disorders, thus *Hezekiah* humbled himself for the pride of his Heart, *2 Chron. 32. 26.* Thus the People were ordered to spread forth their hands to God in Prayer, in a sence of the Plague of their own Hearts, *1 Kings 8. 38.* Upon this account many an upright heart

What it is to keep the Heart. II

heart hath been laid low before God : O What an heart have I ? they have in their confessions pointed at the heart, the pained place ; Lord here is the wound, here is the Plague-fore ; it is with the Heart well kept, as it is with the eye, which is a fit emblem of it ; if a small dust get into the eye, it will never leave twinkling and watering till it have wept it out : So the upright heart cannot be at rest till it have wept out its troubles, and poured out its complaints before the Lord.

3. It includes earnest Supplications, and instant Prayer for heart-purifying and rectifying Grace, when sin hath defiled and disordered it ; so *Psal.* 119. 12. *Cleanse thou me from secret faults,* and *Psal.* 86. 11. *Unite my heart to fear thy Name.* Saints have alwayes many such Petitions depending before the Throne of Grace ; this is the thing which is most pleaded by them with God : when they are praying for outward mercies, happily their Spirits may be more remiss, but when it comes to the heart-case, then they intend their Spirits to the utmost, fill their mouths with Arguments, weep and make supplications ; Oh, for a better heart ! Oh for a heart to love God more ! To hate sin more, to walk more evenly

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evenly with God; Lord deny not to me such a Heart whatever thou deny me; Give me an Heart to fear thee, love, and delight in thee, if I beg my bread in desolate places. 'Tis observed of holy Mr. *Bradford*, that when he was confessing sin, he would never give over confessing until he had felt some brokenness of Heart for that sin, and when praying for any spiritual Mercy, would never give over that suite, till he had got some relish of that Mercy; that's the third thing included in keeping the heart.

4. It includes the imposing of strong engagements and Bonds upon our selves to walk more accurately with God, and avoid the occasions whereby the Heart may be induced to sin: Well composed, advised, and deliberate Vows are in some cases of excellent use to guard the Heart, against some special sin. So *Job. 31. 1. I made a covenant with my eyes*; by this means, holy ones have over-awed their souls, and preserved themselves from defilement by some special Heart-corruptions.

5. It includes a constant holy jealousy over our own Hearts, quick-sighted self-jealousie is an excellent preservative from sin, He that will keep his Heart, must have
have

have the eyes of his Soul awake and open upon all the disorderly, and tumultuous stirrings of his affections, if the affections break loose, and the passions be stirred, the Soul must discover and suppress them before they get to an height: O my Soul Dost thou well in this? My tumultuous thoughts and passions, Where is your Commission? *State viri, qua causa vie? quive estis in armis. Virg.*

Happy is the man that thus feareth alwayes, *Prov.* 28. 14. By this fear of the Lord it is that men depart from evil, shake off security, and preserve themselves from iniquity, he that will keep his heart must feed with fear, rejoyce with fear, and pass the whole time of his sojourning here in fear, and all little enough to keep the heart from sin.

6. And lastly; To add no more, it includes the reallizing of Gods presence with us, and setting the Lord alwayes before us: this the people of God have found a singular means to keep their hearts upright, and awe them from sin: when the eye of our Faith is fixed upon the eye of Gods Omniscience, we dare not let out our thoughts and affections to vanity: Holy *Job* durst not suffer his heart to yield to an impure, vain thought,
and

14 *Heart-work difficult work.*

and what was it that moved him to so great a circumspection? Why he tells you, *Job* 31. 1. *Doth he not see my ways, and count all my steps? Walk before me* (saith God to *Abraham*) *and be thou perfect,* *Gen.* 17. 1. Even as Parents use to set their Children in the Congregation before them, knowing that else they will be roying and playing; so would the Heart of the best man too, were it not for the eye of God.

In these and such like particulars, do gracious souls express the care they have of their hearts; they are as careful to prevent the breaking loose of their corruptions in times of temptation, as Seamen are to bind fast their Guns, that they break not loose in a storm; as careful to preserve the sweetness and comfort they have got from God in any duty, as one that comes out of an hot Bath, or great Sweat, is of taking cold, by going forth into the chill air: this is the work, and of all works in Religion it is the most difficult, constant and important work.

1. 'Tis the hardest work: Heart-work is hard work indeed: To shuffle over Religious duties with a loose and heedless Spirit, will cost no great pains; but to set thy self before the Lord, and rye up thy loose

loose and vain thoughts to a constant and serious attendance upon him, this will cost thee something: to attain a facility and dexterity of language in Prayer, and put thy meaning into apt and decent expressions is easie, but to get thy heart broken for sin whilst thou art confessing it; melted with free grace whilst thou art blessing God for it, to be really ashamed and humbled through the apprehensions of God's infinite Holiness, and to keep thy Heart in this frame, not only in, but after Duty; will surely cost thee some groans, and travelling pains of Soul: to repress the outward acts of sin, and compose the external part of thy life in a laudable and comely manner is no great matter, even carnal persons by the force of common Principles can do this; but to kill the root of corruption within, to set and keep up an holy Government over thy thoughts, to have all things lye streight and orderly in the Heart, this is not easie.

2. 'Tis a constant work; the keeping of the Heart is such a work, as is never done till life be done; this labour and our life end together: It is with a Christian in this business as it is with Seamen, that have sprung a Leak at Sea, if they
tug

16 . *Heart work important work*

tug not constantly at the pump, the water encreases upon them, and will quickly sink them: 'tis in vain for them to say the work is hard, and we are weary: There is no time or condition in the life of a Christian, which will suffer an intermission of this work: It is in the keeping watch over our hearts, as it was in the keeping up of *Moses* his hands, whilst *Israel* and *Amaleck* were fighting below, *Exod.* 17. 12. No sooner do *Moses* his hands grow heavy and sink down, but *Amaleck* prevails: You know it cost *David* and *Peter* many a sad day and night for intermitting the watch over their own hearts but a few minutes.

3. 'Tis the most important business of a Christians life; without this we are but Formalists in Religion: all our professions, Gifts and Duties signifie nothing: *My Son give me thine heart, Prov.* 23. 26. God is pleased to call that a gift, which is indeed a debt; he will put this honour upon the creature to receive it from him in the way of a gift; but if this be not given him, he regards not what ever else you bring to him: there is so much only of worth and value in what we do, as there is of heart in it: Concerning the heart, God seems to say as
Joseph

Heart work important work. 17

Joseph of Benjamin, if you bring not Benjamin with you, you shall not see my face. Among the Heathens when the Beast was cut up for Sacrifice, the first thing the Priest lookt upon was the Heart, and if that were unsound and naught, the Sacrifice was rejected. God rejects all duties (how glorious soever in other respects) offered him without a heart: he that performs duty without a heart, viz. needlessly, is no more accepted with God, than he that performs it with a double heart, viz. Hypocritically, *Isa. 66. 3.* And thus I have briefly opened the nature of the Duty, what is imported in this phrase, *Keep thy heart.*

2. Next, I shall give you some rational account why Christians should make this the great business of their lives, to keep their hearts?

The importance and necessity of making this our great and main business, will manifestly appear in that, 1. The honour of God. 2. The sincerity of our Profession. 3. The beauty of our conversation. 4. The comfort of our souls. 5. The improvement of our Graces: And 6. Our stability in the hour of temptation, are all wrapt up in, and dependent on our sincerity and care

18. *The glory of God much concern'd*
in the management of this Work.

1. The Glory of God is much concern'd therein; heart-evils are very provoking evils to the Lord. The Schools do well observe, that outward sins are *majoris infamia*, sins of greater infamy; but heart-sins are *majoris reatus*, sins of deeper guilt. How severely hath the Great God declared his wrath from Heaven against Heart-wickedness? The great Crime for which the old World stands indicted, *Gen. 6. 5, 6, 7.* is heart-wickedness; God saw that every imagination (or fiction) of their heart was only evil, and that continually: for which he sent the dreadfulest Judgment that was ever executed since the World began: *And the Lord said, I will destroy Adam whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both Man and Beast, and the creeping things and the Fowls of Heaven, for it repenteth me that I have made Adam, v. 7.* We find not their Murders, Adulteries, Blasphemies, (though they were defiled with these) particularly alledged against them; but the evils of their hearts: yea, that which God was so provoked by, as to give up his peculiar inheritance into the enemies hand, was the evil of their hearts, *Jer. 4. 14. O Jerusalem wash thine heart, from*

from wickedness that thou maist be saved, how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee: The wickedness and vanity of their thoughts God took special notice of; and because of this the *Caldeans* must come upon them as a *Lion from his thickets*, v. 7. and tear them to pieces. For the very sin of thoughts it was that God threw down the fallen Angels from Heaven, and keeps them still in everlasting chains to the Judgment of the great day; by which expression is not obscurely intimated some extraordinary Judgment to which they are reserved, as Prisoners that have most irons laid upon them, may be supposed to be the greatest Malefactors: and what was their sin? Why, only spiritual wickedness, for they having no bodily Organs, could act nothing externally against God. Yea, meer heart-evils are so provoking, that for them he rejects with indignation all the duties that some men perform unto him, *Isa. 66. 3.* *He that killeth an Ox, as if he slew a Man, he that sacrificeth a Lamb, as if he cut off a dogs neck, he that offereth an Oblation, as if he offered Swines Blood, he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an Idol.* In what words could the abhorrence of a Creatures actions be

20 *The Sincerity of Profession evidenc'd* & more fully exprest by the holy God; Murther and Idolatry are not more vile in his account than their Sacrifices, though materially such as himself appointed: and What made them so? the following words inform us, *Their Soul delighteth in their abominations?*

To conclude, such is the vileness of meer heart-sins, that the Scriptures sometimes intimate the difficulty of pardon for them. So in the case of *Simon Magus*, *Acts* 8. 21. his heart was not right, he had vile thoughts of God, and the things of God, the Apostle bids him *repent and pray, if perhaps the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him.* O then never slight heart-evils! for by these God is highly wronged and provoked, and for this reason let every Christian make it his work to keep his heart with all diligence.

2. The sincerity of our Profession depends much upon the care and Conscience we have in keeping our hearts; for it's most certain that a man is but an hypocrite in his Profession, how curious soever he be in the externals of Religion, that is heedless and careless of the frame of his heart; you have a pregnant instance of this in the case of *John*, *2 Kings*

10.31. But Jehu took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord God of Israel with his heart. That Context gives us an account of the great service perform'd by Jehu against the house of Ahab and Baal, as also of a great temporal reward given him by God for that Service, even that his children to the fourth Generation should sit upon the Throne of Israel. And yet in these words Jehu is censured for an Hypocrite; though God approved and rewarded the work, yet he abhorred and rejected the person that did it as hypocritical: and wherein lay his hypocrisy? but in this, that he took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord with his heart, (i. e.) he did all insincerely, and for self-ends; and though the work he did were materially good, yet he not purging his heart from those unworthy self-designs in doing it, was an hypocrite: And Simon of whom we spake before: though he appeared such a person that the Apostle could not regularly refuse him, yet his hypocrisy was quickly discovered: and, What discovered it? but this, that though he professed and associated himself with the Saints, yet he was a stranger to the mortification of heart-sins: *Thy heart is not right with*

22 *The Sincerity of Profession, &c.*

God; *Acts* 8. 21 — 'Tis true, there is a great difference among Christians themselves in their diligence and dexterity about heart-work; some are more conversant and successful in it than others are, but he that takes no heed to his heart, he that is not careful to order it aright before God, is but a Hypocrite, *Ezek.* 33. 31, 32. *And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and sit before thee [as my people] and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goes after their covetousness.* Here were a company of formal Hypocrites, as is evident by that expression [as my people] like them, but not of them: and what made them so? their outside was fair, here were reverent postures, high professions, much seeming joy and delight in Ordinances, *Thou art to them, as a lovely Song*; yea, but for all that, they kept not their hearts with God in those duties, their hearts were commanded by their lusts, they went after their covetousness; had they kept their hearts with God, all had been well, but not regarding which way their hearts went in duty; there lay the coar of their hypocrisy.

Object. If any upright Soul should hence

hence infer, then I am an hypocrite too, for many times my heart departs from God in duty, do what I can, yet I cannot hold it close with God.

Sol. To this I answer, the very Objection carries in it its own Solution: Thou sayest, do what I can, yet I cannot keep my heart with God. Soul, if thou dost what thou canst thou hast the blessing of an upright, though God sees good to exercise thee under the affliction of a discomposed heart. There remains still some wildness in the thoughts and fancies of the best to humble them; but if you find a care before to prevent them, and opposition against them when they come, grief and sorrow afterwards; you will find enough to clear you from reigning hypocrisy. (1.) This fore-care is seen partly in laying up the word in thine heart to prevent them, *Psal. 119. 11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee*: partly in our endeavours to engage our hearts to God, *Jer. 30. 21.* and partly in begging preventing grace from God in our onsets upon duty, *Psal. 119. 36, 37.* 'tis a good sign where this care goes before a duty. And (2) 'tis a sweet sign of uprightness to oppose them in their first rise,

24 *The beauty of the Conversation*

Psal. 119. 113. I hate vain thoughts, Gal. 5. 17. The spirit lusteth against the flesh. And (3) Thy after-grief discovers thy upright heart; if with *Hezekiah* thou art humbled for the evils of thy heart, thou hast no reason from these disorders to question the integrity of it; but to suffer sin to lodg quietly in the heart, to let thy heart habitually and uncontrolledly wander from God, is a sad and dangerous symptom indeed.

3. The beauty of our Conversation arises from the heavenly frames, and holy order of our spirits; there is a spiritual lustre and beauty in the Conversation of Saints, *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour*, they shine as the lights of the World; but whatever lustre and beauty is in their lives, comes from the excellency of their Spirits; as the Candle within puts a lustre upon the Lanthorn in which it shines. It is impossible that a disordered and neglected heart should ever produce a well-ordered conversation; and since (as the Text observes) the issues or streames of life flow out of the heart as their fountain, it must needs follow, that such as the heart is, the life will be: hence *1 Pet. 2. 11, 12. Abstain from fleshly lusts:—having your*
con-

depends upon keeping the heart. 25

*conversation honest, * or beautiful* * *Κάλως*
as the Greek word imports. So

Isa. 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way,
and the unrighteous man his thoughts.
His way notes the course of his life, his
thoughts the frame of his heart; and
therefore since the way and course of
his life flows from his thoughts, or the
frame of his heart, both or neither will
be forsaken: the heart is the womb of
all actions, these actions are virtually and
seminally contained in our thoughts, these
thoughts being once made up into af-
fections, are quickly made out into suita-
ble actions and practices. If the heart
be wicked, then as *Christ* saith, *Mat-*
thew 15. 19. Out of the heart proceed evil
Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, &c.
Mark the order, first, wanton or revenge-
ful thoughts, then unclean or Murderous
practises.

And if the heart be holy or spiritual,
then as *David* speaks from sweet expe-
rience, in *Psal. 45. 1. My heart is [indi-*
ting] a good matter, I speak of the things
which [I have made] my tongue is as the
pen of a ready writer. Here's a life richly
beautified with good works; some ready
made; *I will speak of the things which I*
have made: others upon the wheel ma-
king

26 *The beauty of the Conversation*

king. *My heart is ending*, but both proceeding from the heavenly frame of his heart.

Put but the heart in frame, and the life will quickly discover that it is so. I think it is not very difficult to discern by the duties and converses of Christians, what frames their spirits are under; take a Christian in a good frame, and how serious, heavenly, and profitable will his converses and duties be! what a lovely companion is he, during the continuance of it! 'twould do any ones heart good to be with him at such a time, *Psal. 37. 30, 31. The mouth of the righteous speaketh Wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment, the Law of his God is in his heart.*

When the heart is up with God, and full of God, how dexterously and ingeniously will he wind in spiritual discourse, improving every occasion and advantage to some heavenly purpose, few words run then at the waste spout.

And what else can be the reason, why the discourses and duties of many Christians are become so frothy and unprofitable, their communion both with God, and one another become as a dry stalk, but because their hearts are neglected,

depends upon keeping the heart. 27

lected. Surely this must be the reason of it, and verily it is an evil greatly to be bewailed, for as by this, Christian-fellowship is become a senseless thing, so the attracting beauty that was wont to shine from the Conversations of the Saints upon the Faces and Consciences of the World, (which if it did not allure and bring them in love with the wayes of God; yet at least left a testimony in their Consciences of the excellency of those men and their way) this is in a great measure lost, to the unspeakable detriment of Religion.

Time was, when Christians did carry it at such a rate, that the World stood at a gaze at them, as that word, *1 Pet. 4. 4.* imports, their life *ἔτις ὅρας* and language was of a different strain from others, their tongues discovered them to be *Galilaans* where ever they came; but now since vain speculations, and fruitless controversies have so much obtained, and heart-work, practical godliness, so much neglected among Professors, the case is sadly altered, their discourse is become like other Mens: if they come among you now, they may (to allude to that, *Acts 2. 6.* *Hear every Man speak in his own language.* And truly

truly I have little hope to see this evil redressed, and the credit of Religion again repaired; till Christians fall again to their old work, till they ply heart-work closer: when the salt of heavenly mindedness is again cast into the Spring, the *streames* will run clearer and sweeter.

4. The comfort of our Souls doth much depend upon the keeping of our hearts, for he that is negligent in attending his own heart, is (ordinarily) a great stranger to assurance, and the sweet comfort, flowing from it.

Indeed, if the *Antinomian* Doctrine were true, which teaches you to reject all marks and signs for the tryal of your conditions, telling you it is only the Spirit that immediately assures you by witnessing your adoption directly without them, then you might be careless of your hearts, yea, strangers to them, and yet no strangers to comfort: but since both Scripture and experience do confute this dorage, I hope you will never look for comfort in that unscriptural way. I deny not but it is the work and office of the Spirit to assure you, and yet do confidently affirm, that if ever you attain assurance in the ordinary way wherein God dispenses it, you must take pains with

dependant on keeping the heart. 29

with your own hearts, you may expect your comforts upon easier terms; but I am mistaken, if ever you enjoy them upon any other: *Give all diligence; prove your selves*: this is the Scripture way. I remember Mr. Roberts in his Treatise of the Covenant, tells us, That he knew a Christian who in the infancy of his Christianity, so vehemently painted after the infallible assurance of Gods love, that for a long time together he earnestly desired some voice from Heaven; yea, sometimes walking in the solitary fields; earnestly desired some Miraculous Voice from the Trees and Stones there; this, after many desires and longings was denied him: but in time a better was afforded in the ordinary way of searching the Word, and his own heart. An instance of the like nature the Learned *Gerson* gives us, Of one that was driven by temptation upon the very borders of desperation, at last being sweetly settled and assured, one asked him, How he attained it? he answered, *Non ex nova aliqua revelatione, &c.* Not by any extraordinary revelation, but by subjecting his understanding to the Scriptures, and comparing his own heart with them. The Spirit indeed assures by witnessing

witnessing our adoption, and he witnesseth two wayes. (1) Objectively; (*i. e.*) by working those Graces in our Souls which are the conditions of the Promise, and so the Spirit and his Graces in us are all one; the Spirit of God dwelling in us, is a mark of our adoption. Now the Spirit cannot be discerned in his essence, but in his operations; and to discern these is to discern the Spirit; and how these should be discerned without serious searching and diligent watching of the heart, I cannot imagine, (2) The other way of the Spirits witnessing is effectively, (*i. e.*) by irradiating the Soul with a Grace-discovering light; shining upon his own work; and this in order of nature follows the former work: he first infuses the Grace, and then opens the eye of the Soul to see it. Now since the heart is the subject of that infused Grace, even this way of the Spirits witnessing also includes the necessity of keeping carefully our own hearts: for (1) A neglected heart is so confused and dark, that the little grace which is in it is not ordinarily discernable: the most accurate and laborious Christians, that take most pains, and spend most time about their hearts, do yet find it very dif-

difficult to discover the pure and genuine workings of the Spirit there: how then shall the Christian, which is (comparatively) negligent and remiss about heart-work, be ever able to discover it? Sincerity which is the *quisitum*, the thing sought for, lies in the heart like a small piece of Gold in the bottom of a River, he that will find it must stay till the water be clear and settled, and then he shall see it sparkling at the bottom; and that the heart may be clear and settled, how much pains and watching, care and diligence will it cost?

2. God doth not usually indulge lazy and negligent souls with the comforts of Assurance, he will not so much as seem to patronize sloth and carelessness, he will give it, but it shall be in his own way; his command hath united our care and comfort together: they are mistaken that think the beautiful Child of Assurance may be born without pangs: Ah, how many solitary hours have the people of God spent in heart-examination? How many times have they looked into the Word, and then into their hearts? Sometimes they thought they discovered sincerity, and
were

were even ready to draw forth the triumphant conclusion of Assurance, then comes a doubt they cannot resolve, and dashes all again; many hopes and fears, doubtings and reasonings they have had in their own breasts, before they arrived at a comfortable settlement.

To conclude, Suppose it possible for a careless Christian to attain Assurance, yet 'tis impossible he should long retain it; for it is with those whose hearts are big with the joyes of Assurance, as with a pregnant Woman subject to miscarriages; if extraordinary care be not used, it is a thousand to one if ever she imbrace a living Child: So 'tis here, a little pride, vanity, carelessness, dashes all that for which thou hast been labouring a long time in many a weary duty. Since then the joy of our life, the comfort of our souls, rises and falls without diligence in this work; keep your hearts with all diligence.

5. The improvement of our Graces depends on the keeping of our hearts; I never knew Grace thrive in a negligent and careless Soul; the habits and roots of grace are planted in the heart; and the deeper they are radicated there, the more thriving and flourishing Grace is: in *Eph.*

dependant on keeping the Heart. 33

3, 17. we read of *being rooted in Grace*: Grace in the heart is the root of every gracious word in the mouth, and of every holy work in the hand, *Psal.* 116. 10. 2 *Cor.* 4. 13. 'tis true, Christ is the root of a Christian; but Christ is *Origo originans*, the originating root and grace, *Origo originata*, a root originated, planted, and influenced by Christ, according as this thrives under divine influences, so the acts of grace are more or less fruitful and vigorous: Now in a heart not kept with care and diligence, these fructifying influences are stop't and cut off, multitudes of vanities break in upon it, and devour its strength; the heart is as it were the pasture in which multitudes of thoughts are fed every day; a gracious heart diligently kept, feeds many precious thoughts of God in a day, *Psal.* 139.

17. *How precious are thy thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! if I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; and when I awake, I am still with thee.* And as the gracious heart feeds and nourishes them, so they refresh and feast the heart, *Psal.* 63. 5, 6. *My soul is filled as with Marrow and fatness whilest I think upon thee, &c.* But in the disregarded heart, swarms of vain and foolish

D

thoughts

34 *The Improvement of Grace, &c.*

thoughts are perpetually working, and juggle out those spiritual Idea's and thoughts of God, by which the Soul should be refreshed.

Besides, the careless heart makes nothing out of any Duty or Ordinance it performs or attends on, and yet these are the Conduits of Heaven from whence Grace is watred and made fruitful; a man may go with an heedless spirit from Ordinance to Ordinance, abide all his dayes under the choicest teachings, and yet never be improved by them; for heart neglect is a leak in the bottom, no heavenly influences, how rich soever, abide in that Soul, *Matth. 13.*

3. 4. The heart that lies open and common like the High-way, free for all passengers; when the feed fell on it, the Fowls came and devoured it. Alas! it is not enough to hear, unless we take heed how we hear: a man may Pray, and never the better, unless we watch unto Prayer. In a word, all Ordinances, Means and Duties are blessed unto the improvement of Grace, according to the care and strictness we use in keeping our hearts in them.

6. Lastly, the stability of our souls in the hour of temptation, will be much according

according to the care and Conscience we have of keeping our hearts; the careless heart is an easie prey to Satan in the hour of temptation. his main Batteries are raised against that Fort-royal, the Heart; if he win that, he wins all, for it commands the whole Man; and alas, how easie a Conquest is a neglected heart; 'tis no more difficult to surprize it, than for an enemy to enter that City, whose Gates are open and unguarded: 'tis the watchful heart that discovers and suppresses the temptation before it come to its strength. Divines observe this to be the method in which temptations are ripened and brought to their full strength; there is first the irritation of the *object*, or that power it hath to work upon and provoke our corrupt nature, which either done by the real presence of the object, or else by Speculation, when the object (though absent) is held out by the phantasy before the Soul. (2) Then follows the motion of the sensitive appetite, which is stirred and provoked by the phantasy, representing it as a sensual good, as having profit or pleasure in it. (3) Then there is a consultation in the mind a-

ἐρεξίς.

ὁσμή.

βούλησις.

bout it, deliberating about the like-
 liest means of accomplishing
 it. (4) Next follows the Ele-
 ction or choice of the Will.

(5) And lastly, The desire
 of full engagement of the

Will to it; all this may be done in a
 few moments, for the debates of the
 Soul are quick, and soon ended: when
 it comes thus far, then the heart is won,
 Satan hath entred victoriously, and dis-
 played his Colours upon the Walls of
 that Royal Fort; but had the heart
 been well guarded at first, it had never
 come to this height; the temptation had
 been stopt in the first or second act; and
 indeed there it's stopt easily, for it is in
 the motions of a tempted Soul to Sin;
 as in the motion of a Stone falling from the
 brow of an Hill, its easily stopt at
 first, but when once its set a going *Vires*
acquirat cundo: and therefore its the
 greatest VVisdom in the VVorld to ob-
 serve the first motions of the heart, to
 check and stop sin there: the motions
 of sin are weakest at first; a little care
 and watchfulness may prevent much
 mischief now, which the careless heart
 not heeding, is brought within the power
 of temptation; as the *Syrians* were
 brought

obtained by keeping the heart. 37

brought blindfold into the midst of *Samaritan*, before they knew where they were.

By this time Reader, I hope thou art fully satisfied how consequential and necessary a work the keeping of thy heart is, it being a duty that wraps up so many dear interests of the Soul in it.

3. Next, According to the method propounded, I proceed to point out those special Seasons in the life of a Christian, which require and call for our utmost diligence in keeping the heart: for though (as was observed before) the Duty bind, *ad semper*, and there be no time or condition of life in which we may be excused from this work; yet there are some signal seasons, Critical houres, requiring more than a common vigilance over the heart.

And the first.

1. *Season.* "Is the time of prosperity, when Providence smiles upon us, and dandles us upon her knee. Now Christian, keep thy heart with all diligence; for now 'twill be exceeding apt to grow secure, proud and earthly, *Rara virtus est humilitas honorata* (saith Bernard) to see a man humble under prosperity, is one
" of

38 *How the heart is kept from pride,*
 "of the greatest rarities in the World.
 "Even a good *Hezekiah* could not hide a
 "vain-glorious temper under this tem-
 "ptation, and hence that Caution to *Israel*,
 "Deut. 6. 10, 11, 12. *And it shall be*
 "when the Lord thy God shall have brought
 "thee into the Land which he swore to thy
 "Fathers, to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*,
 "to give thee great and goodly Cities which
 "thou buildest not, and houses full of all
 "good things which thou filledst not, &c.
 "Then beware lest thou forget the Lord, and
 "indeed so it fell out, for *Jesurun* waxed
 "fat and kicked, Deut. 32. 15.

Now then the first case will be this, viz.

1. Case. *How a Christian may keep his heart from Pride and carnal security under the smiles of providence, and confluence of Creature comforts?*

There are seven choice helps to secure the heart from the dangerous snares of prosperity, the first is this.

1. To consider the dangerous insnaring temptations attending a pleasant and prosperous condition: few, yea very few of those that live in the pleasures and prosperity of this world, escape everlasting perdition, Matth. 19 24. 'tis easier (saith Christ) for a Camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,

and security in a prosperous state: 39

Heaven, 1 Cor. 1. 26 *not many mighty, not many noble are called.* It might justly make us tremble when the Scripture tells us in general, that few shall be saved, much more when it tells us, that of that rank and sort of which we are, but few shall be saved. When *Joshua* called all the Tribes of *Israel* to lot upon them for the discovery of *Achan*, doubtless *Achan* feared; when the Tribe of *Judah* was taken, his fear increased; but when the family of the *Zarhites* was taken, it was time then to tremble. So when the Scripture comes so near as to tell us that of such a sort of Men very few shall escape, 'tis time to look about: *miror si potest servari aliquis rectorum*, saith *Chrysostome*, I should wonder if any of the Rulers be saved. O how many have been Coached to Hell in the Chariots of earthly pleasures, whilst others have been whipt to Heaven by the rod of affliction? How few, like the Daughter of *Tyre*, come to Christ with a gift! How few among the rich intreat his favour.

2. *It may yet keep us more humble and watchful in prosperity, if we consider that among Christians many have been much the worse for it; How good had it been for some of them if they had never known*

40 *How the Heart is kept from pride*

prosperity : when they were in a low condition, how humble, spiritual and heavenly were they; but when advanced, what an apparent alteration hath been upon their spirits; 'twas so with *Israel* when they were in a low condition in the *VVilderness*; then *Israel* was, *Holiness to the Lord*, *Jer.* 2. 23. but when they came into *Canaan*, and were fed in a fat pasture, then, *We are Lords*, *we will come no more unto thee*, *vers.* 31. outward gains are ordinarily attended with inward losses, as in a low condition, their civil employments were wont to have a tang and savour of their duties, so in an exalted condition, their Duties commonly have a tang of the *VVorld*. He indeed is rich in Grace, whose Graces are not hindred by his Riches, there are but few *Jehosaphats* in the *VVorld*, of whom its said, *2. Chron.* 17. 5, 6. *He had silver and gold in abundance, and his heart was lifted up in the way of Gods commands:* *VVill not this keep thy heart humble in prosperity, to think how dear many godly men have paid for their riches, that through them they have lost that which all the VVorld cannot purchase:* Then in the next place.

3. Keep down thy vain heart by this
Con-

and security in a prosperous state. 4

Consideration. That God values no man a jot the more for these things. God values no man by outward excellencies, but by inward Graces, they are the internal ornaments of the Spirit, which are of great price in Gods eyes, 1 Pet. 3. 4. he despises all worldly glory, and accepts no mans person, but in every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him, Acts 10. 35. Indeed, if the Judgment of God went by the same rule that mans doth, we might value our selves by these things, and stand upon them: but as one said (when dying) I shall not appear before God as a Doctor, but as a Man; *tantum quisquis est, quantum est apud Deum*. So much every man is, and no more, as he is in the judgment of God. Doth thy heart yet swell? and will neither of the former considerations keep it humble.

4. Then fourthly, Consider how bitterly many persons have bewailed their folly when they came to dye, that ever they set their hearts upon these things, and heartily wish that they had never known them. What a sad story was that of *Mar. Quintus*, who dying, cryed out despairingly, VVhen I was in a low condition, I had some hopes of Salvation, but when I was advanced
to

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to be a *Cardinal*, I greatly doubted it, but since I came to the Popedom, I have no hope at all. Mr. *Spencer* also tells us a real, but sad story of a rich oppressor, who had scraped up a great Estate for his only Son; When he came to dye, he called his Son to him, and said, Son, Do you indeed love me? the Son answered, That Nature, besides his paternal Indulgence, obliged him to that; then said the Father, express it by this, hold thy finger in the Candle as long as I am saying a *Pater Noster*; the Son attempted, but could not endure it; upon that the Father brake out into these expressions, Thou canst not suffer the burning of thy finger for me, but to get this wealth, I have hazarded my Soul for thee, and must burn Body and Soul in Hell for thy sake, thy pains would have been but for a moment, but mine will be unquenchable fire.

5. The Heart may be kept humble by considering of what a clogging nature earthly things are to a Soul heartily engaged in the way to Heaven, they shut out much of Heaven from us at present, though they may not shut us out of Heaven at last. If thou consider thy self under the notion of a stranger in this world, travel-
ing

ing for Heaven, and seeking a better Countrey, thou hast then as much reason to be taken and delighted with these things, as a weary Horse hath with a heavy Cloak-bag: there was a serious truth in that Atheistical scoff of *Julian*, when he took away the Christians Estates and told them it was to make them fitter for the Kingdom of Heaven.

6. Is thy Spirit for all this flatulent and lofty, then urge upon it *the consideration of that awful day of reckoning, wherein according to our receipts of Mercies shall be our accounts for them*: And methinks this should awe and humble the vainest Heart that ever was in the Breast of a Saint. Know for certain, that the Lord records all the Mercies that ever he gave thee, from the beginning to the end of thy life, *Micah 6. 5. Remember O my people, from Shitim unto Gilgal. &c.* Yea, they are exactly numbred, and recorded, in order to an account; and thy account will be suitable, *Luk 12. 48. To whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required.* You are but Stewards, and your Lord will come to take an account of you; and what a great account have you to make who have much of this World in your hands; what swift wit-

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witnesses will your enemies be against you, if this be the best fruit of them?

7. It is a very humbling consideration, *That the mercies of God should work otherwise upon my spirit then they use to do upon the Spirits of others, to whom they come as sanctified Mercies from the love of God.* Ah Lord! VVhat a sad consideration is this? enough to lay me in the dust: when I consider (1) That their mercies have greatly humbled them; the higher God hath raised them, the lower they have laid themselves before God. Thus did Jacob when God had given him much substance, *Gen. 32. 5 10.* And Jacob said, *I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and all the truth which thou hast shewed thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now am become two Bands.* And thus it was with holy David, *2 Sam. 7. 18.* When God had confirmed the promise to him, to build him an house, and not reject him as he did Saul, he goes in before the Lord, and saith, *Who am I, and what is my Fathers house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* and so indeed God required, *Deut. 26. 5.* when Israel was to bring to God the first-fruits of Canaan, they were to say, *A Syrian ready to perish was my Father*
ther

ther, &c. Do others raise God the higher for raising them? and the more God raises me, the more shall I abuse him and exalt my self? O what a sad thing is this! (2) Others have freely ascribed the glory of all their enjoyments to God, and magnified not themselves, but him, for their mercies: So David, 2 Sam. 26. 26. *Let thy name be magnified, and the house of thy servant be established.* He doth not fly upon the mercy, and suck out the sweetness of it, looking no farther than his own comfort; no, he cares for no mercy except God be magnified in it. So Psal. 18. 2. when God had delivered him from all his enemies, *the Lord* (saith he) *is my strength and my rock, he is become my Salvation.* They did not put the Crown upon their own heads as I do. (3) The mercies of God have been melting mercies unto others, melting their Souls in love to the God of their mercies. So Hannah, 1 Sam. 2. 1. when she received the mercy of a Son, my Soul (saith she) rejoiceth in the Lord, not in the mercy, but in the God of the mercy: And so Mary, Luke 1. 46. *My soul doth magnifie the Lord, my Spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour;* the Word signifies, to make more room for God: Their hearts were

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were not contracted, but the more enlarged to God: (4) the Mercies of God have been mighty restraints to keep others from sin. So *Ezra* 9. 13. *Seeing thou our God hast given us such a deliverance as this, should we again break thy Commandments?* ingenious Souls have felt the force of the obligations of Love, and Mercy upon them: (5) to conclude, the Mercies of God to others have been as Oyl to the wheel of their Obedience, and make them fitter for service, *2 Chron.* 17. 5. Now if Mercies work contrarily upon my Heart, what cause have I to be afraid that they come not to me in love? I tell you this is enough to damp the Spirit of any Saint, to see what sweet effects they have had on others, and what sad effects on him.

2. *Season.* The second special Season
“in the life of a Christian requiring
“more than common diligence to keep
“his Heart, is *the time of adversity*; when
“Providence frowns upon you, and
“blasts your outward comforts, then
“look to your Hearts, keep them with
“all diligence from repining against
“God, or fainting under his hand: for
“troubles, though sanctified, are troubles still; even Sweet-Bryar, and Holy

“ly-Thistle have their prickles. *Jonah*
 “was a good Man, and yet how pettish
 “was his Heart under affliction? *Job*
 “was the mirrour of Patience, yet how
 “was his Heart discomposed by trouble?
 “you will find it as hard to get a com-
 “posed Heart under great afflictions, as
 “it is to get Quicksilver: Oh the hurries
 “and tumults which they occasion even
 “in the best Hearts! well then, the second
 “Case will be this,

2 Case. *How a Christian under great afflictions may keep his Heart from repining or desponding under the hand of God?* Now there are nine special helps I shall here offer, to keep thy Heart in this condition; and the first shall be this, To work upon your Hearts this great Truth.

1. *That by these cross Providences, God is faithfully pursuing the great design of electing Love upon the souls of his people, and orders all these afflictions as means sanctified to that end.*

Afflictions fall not out by Casualty, but by Counsel. *Job 5. 6. Eph. 1. 11.* by this Counsel of God they are ordained as means of such spiritual good to Saints, *Isa. 27. 9. By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged. &c. Heb. 12. 10. But he for our profit, &c. Rom 8. 28. All things work together*

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gether for good, they are Gods Workmen upon our hearts, to pull down the pride and carnal security of them; and being so, their nature is changed; they are turned into blessings and benefits, *Psal. 119, 71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* And sure then, thou hast no reason to quarrel with, but rather to admire that God should concern himself so much in thy good, to use any means for the accomplishing of it, *Philip. 3. 11. Paul could bless God if by any means he might attain the Resurrection of the dead, my brethren (saith James) count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations, 1 Jam. 2. 3.* My Father is about a design of Love upon my soul, and do I well to be angry with him? all that he does is in pursuance of, and reference to some eternal glorious ends upon my Soul. O 'tis my ignorance of Gods design, that makes me quarrel with him! he saith to thee in this case, as to Peter, *What I do thou knowest not now, but hereafter thou shalt know it.*

2. Help. Though God hath reserved to himself a liberty of afflicting his people, yet he hath tyed up his own hands by Promise, never to take away his loving kindness from them. Can I look that Scripture in the face

face with a repining discontented Spirit,
*2 Sam. 7. 14. I will be his Father, and he
 shall be my Son; if he commit iniquity, I will
 chasten him with the rod of Men: neverthe-
 less my mercy shall not depart away from him.*

O my heart, my haughty heart; dost thou
 well to be discontented, when God hath
 given thee the whole Tree, with all the
 clusters of comfort growing on it; be-
 cause he suffers the wind to blow down a
 few leaves? Christians have two sorts
 of goods, the goods of the throne, and
 the goods of the foot-stool; Moveables
 and Immoveables; if God have secured
 these, never let my heart be troubled at
 the loss of those: indeed, if he had cut
 off his love, or discovenanted my soul, I had
 reason to be cast down; but this he hath
 not, he cannot do:

3. *Help.* It is of marvellous efficacy to
 keep the heart from sinking under af-
 fliction to call to mind: that thine own fa-
 ther hath the ordering of them: not a Crea-
 ture moves hand or tongue against thee,
 but by his permission. Suppose the cup
 be a bitter cup, yet 'tis the cup which thy
 Father hath given thee to drink, and
 canst thou suspect poison to be in that
 cup which he delivers thee? foolish man,

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put home the case to thine own heart
consult with thine own bowels; canst
thou find in thy heart to give thy Child
that which would hurt and undo him?
no, thou wouldst as soon hurt thy self as
him; *If thou then being evil, knowest how
to give good gifts to thy Children,* how much
more doth God; *Matth. 7. 11.* the very
consideration of his nature, a God of love,
pity, and tender mercies, or of his rela-
tion to thee, as a father, husband, friend;
might be security enough, if he had not
spoken a word to quiet thee in this case:
and yet you have his word too, *Ier. 25. 6.*
I will do you no hurt. You lye too near
his heart to hurt you, nothing grieves him
more than your groundless and unworthy
suspicions of his designs do; would it not
grieve a faithful tender-hearted Physician,
when he hath studied the case of his Pa-
tient, prepared the most excellent Re-
ceipts to save his life, to hear him cry out;
Oh he hath undone me, he hath poisoned
me; because it gripes and pains him in the
operation? O when will you be ingenu-
ous!

4. *Help.* God respects you as much in a
low, as in a high condition; and therefore it
need not so much trouble you to be made low;
nay, to speak home, he manifests more
of

of his love, grace, and tenderness, in the time of affliction than prosperity: as God did not at first chuse you because you were high, so he will not forsake you because you are low: men may look thine upon you, and alter their respects as your condition is altered: when Providence hath blasted your estates, your Summer friends may grow strange, as fearing you may be troublesome to them, but will God do so; No, no, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, Heb. 13. 5. indeed if adversity and poverty could bar you from access to God, it were a sad condition; but you may go to God as freely as ever, *My God* (saith the Church) *will bear me*, *Isaiah* 7. Poor David, when stript out of all earthly comforts, could yet encourage himself in the Lord his God, and, Why cannot you? Suppose your husband or child had lost all at Sea, and should come to you in raggs, Could you deny the relation, or refuse to entertain him? if you would not, much less will God: Why then are you so troubled? though your condition be changed, your Fathers love and respects are not changed.

5. Help. *And what if by the loss of outward comforts, God will preserve your Souls,*

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from the ruining power of temptation; sure then, you have little cause to sink your hearts, by such sad thoughts about them. Are not these earthly enjoyments, the things that make men shrink and warp in times of tryal; for the love of these many have forsaken Christ in such an hour, *Math.* 19. 22. he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions; and if this be Gods design; what have I done in quarrelling with him about it. We see Mariners in a storm, can throw over-board rich Bayles of Silk, and precious things, to preserve the vessel and their lives with it, and every one saith, they act prudently; we know 'tis usual for Souldiers in a City besieged, to batter down or burn the fairest buildings without the Walls in which the enemy may shelter in the Siege, and no Man doubts but 'tis wisely done: such as have gangrened legs or arms, can willingly stretch them out to be cut off, and not only thank, but pay the Chyrurgion for his pains; and must God only be repined at? for casting over what would sink you in a storm? for pulling down that which would advantage your enemy in the siege of temptation; for cutting off what would endanger your everlasting life? O inconsiderate; ingrateful

grateful Man! are not these things for which thou grievest, the very things that have ruined thousands of souls? Well, what Christ doth in this, thou knowest not now, but hereafter thou mayest.

6. *Help.* It would much stay the heart under adversity, to consider, *That God by such humbling providences, may be accomplishing that for which you have long prayed, and waited:* And should you be troubled at that: say, Christian, hast thou not many Prayers depending before God upon such accounts as these; that he would keep thee from sin; discover to thee the emptiness and insufficiency of the Creature? that he would kill and mortifie thy lusts, that thy heart may never find rest in any enjoyment but Christ? why now, by such humbling and impoverishing strokes, God may be fulfilling thy desire: Wouldst thou be kept from sin? lo, he hath hedged up thy way with thorns: Wouldst thou see the Creatures vanity: thy affliction is a fair glass to discover it; for the vanity of the creature is never so effectually and sensibly discovered, as in our own experience of it: wouldst thou have thy corruptions mortified? this is the way: Now God takes away the food and fuel that maintained them; for as

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prosperity beget, and fed them, so adversity, when sanctified, is a means to kill them. Wouldst thou have thy heart to rest no where but in the bosome of God? What better way canst thou imagine providence should take to accomplish thy desire, than by pulling from under thy head, that soft Pillow of Creature-delights on which thou restedst before? and yet thou fret at this, peevish Child, How dost thou exercise thy Fathers patience! if he delay to answer thy Prayers, thou art ready to say he regards thee not; if he do that which really answers the scope and main end of them, but not in the way thou expectedst, thou quarrelledst with him for that; as if in stead of answering, he were crossing all thy hopes and aimes: Is this ingenious? Is it not enough that God is so gracious to do what thou desirest, but thou must be so impudent to expect he should do it in the way which thou prescribest?

7. *Help.* Again, it may stay thy heart, if thou consider; *That in these troubles, God is about that work, which if thou didst see the design of, thy Soul would rejoyce.* We poor creatures are bemisted with much ignorance, and are not able to discern how particular Providences work towards

towards Gods end, and therefore like *Israel* in the Wilderness, are often murmuring because Providence leads us about in a howling Desert, where we are exposed to straits; though yet, then he led them, and is now leading us, *by the right way, to a City of habitations*: if you could but see how God in his secret Counsel hath exactly laid the whole plot and design of thy Salvation; even to the smallest means and circumstances, this way, and by these means; such a one shall be saved, and by no other; such a number of afflictions I appoint for this man, at this time, and in this order; they shall befall him, thus, and thus they shall work for him; could you I say, but discern the admirable harmony of divine dispensations, their mutual relations to each other; together with the general respect and influence they all have into the last end; of all the conditions in the World, you would chuse that you are now in; had you liberty to make your own choice. Providence is like a curious piece of Arras, made up of a thousand shreds: which single we know not what to make of, but put together and stitche up orderly, they represent a beautiful history to the eye: as God works

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all things according to the Counsel of his own will: So that counsel of God hath ordained this, as the best way to bring about thy Salvation: such a one hath a proud heart, so many humbling Providences I appoint for him, such a one an earthly heart; so many impoverishing providences for him: Did you but see this, I need say no more to support the most dejected heart.

8. *Help.* Farther, it would much conduce to the settlement of your hearts to consider, *that by fretting and discontent you do your selves more injury then all the afflictions you lie under could do;* Your own discontent is that which arms your troubles with a sting, 'tis you that make your burthen heavy, by struggling under it; could you but lye quiet under the hand of God, your condition would be much easier and sweeter than it is: *impatiens agrotus crudelem facit Medicum.* This makes God lay on more strokes, as a Father will upon a stubborn Child that receives not correction.

Besides, it unfits the Soul to pray over its troubles; or take in the sense of that good which God intends by them: affliction is a pill, which being wrapt up in patience, and quiet submission, may be easily

easily swallowed; but discontent chews the pill, and so imbitters the soul: God throws away some comfort which he saw would hurt you, and you will throw away your peace after it; he shoots an Arrow which sticks in your Cloaths, and was never intended to hurt, but only to fright you from sin: and you will thrust it onward to the piercing of your very hearts, by dispondency and discontent.

9. *Help.* Lastly, if all this will not do but thy heart (like *Rachel*) still refuses to be comforted or quieted, then consider one thing more; which if seriously pondered, will doubtless do the work, and that is this: *Compare the condition thou art now in (and art so much dissatisfied with) with that condition others are, and thy self deserveest to be in:* Others are roaring in flames, howling under the scourge of vengeance, and amongst them I deserve to be. O my Soul! is this Hell? is my condition as bad as the damned? O what would thousands now in Hell, give to change conditions with me? it is a famous instance which Doctor *Taylor* gives us of the Duke of *Conde*, I have read (saith he) that when the Duke of *Conde* had entred voluntarily into the inconveniences of a Religious poverty,

*Great ex-
emp. p. 310.*

poverty, he was one day espyed and pitied by a Lord of *Italy*, who out of tenderness wished him to be more careful and nutritive of his Person: the good Duke answered, Sir, be not troubled; and think not that I am ill provided of conveniences: for I send an *Harbinger* before me, who makes ready my Lodgings, and takes care that I be royally entertained. The Lord asked him, Who was his *Harbinger*? He answered, The knowledge of my self, and the consideration of what I deserve for my sins, which is eternal torments; and when with this knowledge I arrive at my lodging, how unprovided soever I find it; methinks it is ever better than I deserve. *Why doth the living Man complain?* and thus the Heart may be kept from desponding or repining under adversity.

3. *Season.* The third Season calling
 "for more than ordinary diligence to
 "keep the Heart, is the time of *Sions*
 "trouble: when the Church, like the Ship
 "in which Christ and his Disciples were,
 "is oppressed and ready to perish in the
 "waves of persecution, then good Souls
 "are ready to sink and be Shipwreckt too
 "upon the billows of their own fear. I
 "confess most Men rather need the spur,
 than.

“then the Reyns in this case, and yet
 “some sit down as over-weighed with
 “the sense of the Churches troubles; the
 “loss of the *Ark* cost old *Eli* his life,
 “the sad posture *Jerusalem* lay in, made
 “good *Nebemiabs* countenance change in
 “the midst of all the pleasures and accom-
 “modations of the Court, *Neb. 2. 2.* ah
 “this goes close to honest hearts.

“But though God allow, yea, com-
 “mand the most awakened apprehen-
 “sions of these calamities, and in such
 “a day call to mourning, weeping and gird-
 “ing with sackcloth, *Is. 22. 12.* and severely
 “threatens the insensible, *Amos 6. 1.* yet
 “it will not please him to see you sit
 “like pensive *Elijah* under the juniper
 “tree, *1 Kings 19. 4.* Ah Lord God! it is
 “enough, take away my life also; no,
 “mourners in *Sion* you may, and ought
 “to be, but self-tormentors you must
 “not be: complain to God you may,
 “but to complain of God (though but
 “by an unfuitable carriage and the lan-
 “guage of your actions) you must
 “not.

3. *Case.* The third Case that comes
 next to be spoken to is this, *How publick
 and tender hearts may be relieved and sup-
 ported when they are even over-weighed with
 the*

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the burdensome sense of Sions trouble. ? “I
 “grant, it is hard for him that prefer-
 “reth *Sion* to his chief joy, to keep
 “his heart that it sink not below the
 “due sense of its troubles; and yet this
 “ought and may be done by the use
 “of such heart-establishing directions as
 “these.

1. Direct. *Settle this great truth in your hearts, that no trouble befalls Sion, but by the permission of Sions God; and he permits nothing out of which he will not bring much good at last to his people.*

There is as truly a principle of quietness in the permitting, as in the commanding will of God. See it in *David*. 2 Sam. 16. 10. *Let him alone, it may be God hath bidden him:* and in *Christ* *Joh.* 19. 11. *Thou couldst have no power against me except it were given thee from above,* it should much calm our spirits, that it is the will of God to suffer it; and had not he suffered it, it could never have been as it is.

This very consideration quieted *Job*, *Eli*, *David*, and *Hezekiah*, that the Lord did it, was enough to them: and why should it no be so to us? if the Lord will have *Sion* ploughed as a field, and her goodly stones lye in the dust; if it be his pleasure that *Antichrist* shall rage longer,

er and wear out the Saints of the most high: if it be his will, that a day of trouble and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord God of Hosts shall be upon the valley of Vision, that the wicked shall devour the Man that is more righteous than he, what are we that we should contest with God? fit it is, that we should be resigned up to that will whence we proceeded; and he that made us should dispose of us as he pleaseth: he may do what seemeth him good without our consent: doth poor man stand upon equal ground, that he should capitulate with his Creator, or that God should render him an account of any of his matters? it's every way as reasonable we be content however God dispose of us, as that we be obedient to whatsoever he commands us.

But then, if we pursue this argument further, by considering that Gods permissions do all meet at last in the real good of his people, this will much more quiet our spirits. Do the Enemies carry away the good Figs, even the best among the People into Captivity; this looks like a sad providence: but yet, God sends them thither for their good, *Jer. 24. 5.* doth God take the *Assyrian* as a
staff

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staff in his hand to beat his People with ? those blows are smart, and make them cry ; but the end of his so doing is, *that he may accomplish his whole work upon Mount Sion, Isai. 10 12.* If God can bring much good out of the worst, and greatest evil of sin ; much more out of temporal afflictions, and it is as evident that he will, as that he can do so. For it is inconsistent with the wisdom of a common Agent ; to permit any thing (which he might prevent if he pleased) to cross his great design and end ; and can it be imagined that the most wise God should do so.

Well then, as *Luther* told *Melancthon*, *desinat Philippus esse rector mundi* : so say I to you, let infinite wisdom, power, and love alone ; for by these all Creatures are swayed and actions guided, in reference to the Church. Its none of our work to rule the World, but to submit to him that doth, *non caco impetu voluntate rota* the motions of Providence are all judicious, the Wheels are full eyes ; it is enough that the affairs of *Sion* are in a good hand.

2. *Direct.* Ponder this Heart-supporting truth, in reference to *Sion's* trouble. *That how many troubles soever are upon her, yet her King is in her.*

What ?

What? Hath the Lord forsaken his Churches? hath he sold them into the enemies hand? doth he not regard what evil befalls them? that our Hearts sink at this rate? is it not too shameful an undervaluing of the Great God? and too much magnifying of poor impotent Man to fear and tremble at Creatures, whilst God is in the midst of us? The Churches Enemies are many and mighty, let that be granted; yet that Argument with which *Caleb* and *Ioshua* strove to raise their own hearts, is of as much force now as it was then: *The Lord is with us, fear them not*; *Numb. 14. 9.* The Historians tells us, that when *Amigonus* over-heard his souldiers reckoning how many their Enemies were, and so discouraging one another; he suddainly steps in among them with this Question; *and how many* (said he) *do you reckon me for?* discouraged souls? How many do you reckon the Lord for? is he not an over-match for all his Enemies? is not one Almighty more than many mighties? doth his presence stand for nothing with us? *If God be for us who can be against us?* *Rom. 8. 31.* What think you was the reason of that great Exploration *Gideon* made in *Judges 6.* He questions, *ver. 12, 13.* he desires

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desires a sign; v. 17. and after that another, ver. 36. and what was the end of all this? but that he might be sure the Lord was with him, and that he might but write this Motto upon his Ensign. *The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.* So then if you can be well assured, the Lord is with his people. you will get thereby above all your discouragements; and that he is so, you need not (with him) desire a sign from Heaven, lo, you have a sign before you, even their marvellous preservation amidst all their enemies. If God be not with his people, how is it they are not swallowed up quick? Do their Enemies want malice, power, or opportunity? no, but there is an invisible hand upon them. Well then, as it is *Exod. 33. 14.* Let his presence give us rest; and though the Mountains be hurled into the Sea, though Heaven and Earth mingle together; fear not, God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved.

3. *Direct.* Ponder the great advantages attending the People of God in an afflicted condition. If a low and an afflicted state in the World be really best for the Church, then your dejections are not only irrational, but ungrateful: indeed, if ye estimate the happiness of the Church by its worldly

worldly ease, splendor and prosperity, then such times will seem bad for it; but if you reckon its glory to consist in its humility, faith, patience, and heavenly mindedness, no condition in the World abounds with advantages for these as an afflicted condition doth. It was not persecutions and prisons, but worldliness and wantonness that was the poison of the Church; neither was it the earthly glory of its *Professors*, but the blood of its *Martyrs* that was the seed of the Church. The power of godliness did never thrive better than in affliction, and never ran lower than in times of greatest prosperity; when we are left a poor and an afflicted people, then we learn to trust in the Name of the Lord; Zeph. 3. 12. What say ye Sirs? Is it indeed for the Saints advantage to be weaned from the loves and delights of ensnaring worldly vanities? to be quickned and prickt forward with more haste to Heaven, to have clearer discoveries of their own hearts, to be taught to pray more fervently, frequently, spiritually, to look and long for the rest to come more ardently? if this be for their advantage, experience teacheth us, that no condition is ordinarily blest with such fruits as these, like an afflicted Condition.

And is it well done then to repine and droop because your Father consults more the advantage of your souls, than the pleasing of your humours? because he will bring you a nearer way to Heaven than you are willing to go? Is this a due requital of his love, who is pleased so much to concern himself in your welfare? which is more than he will do for thousands in the World, upon whom he will not lay a Rod, or spend an affliction for their good, *Hos. 4. 17. Math. 15. 14.* But alas! We judge by sense, and reason things good or evil, according to what we for the present can taste and feel in them.

4. *Direct.* Take heed that you overlook, not the many precious mercies which the people of God enjoy amidst all their trouble.

It is pity that our tears upon the account of our troubles, should so blear and blind our eyes, that we should not see our mercies and grounds of comfort. I will not insist upon the mercy of having your lives given you for a prey, nor yet upon the many outward comforts, temporal conveniences, and accommodations, which you enjoy even above what Christ and his precious servants, of whom the world was not worthy, ever had.

But

But what say you to pardon of sin? Interest in Christ? The Covenant of Promises? And an eternity of happiness in the presence of God after a few dayes are over? O that ever a People intituled to such Mercies as these, should droop under any temporal affliction, or be so much concerned for the frowns of Men, and loss of trifles! You have not the smiles of great Men, but you have the favour of the great God: You are it may be cast back in your Estates, but thereby furthered in Spirituals. You cannot live so bravely, plentifully, and easily as before, but still you may live as holy and heavenly as ever. Will you then grieve so much for these *circumstantials*, as to forget your *substantials*? Shall light troubles make you forget weighty mercies? Remember the Churches true Riches are hid out of the reach of all its enemies; they may make you poor but not miserable. What though God do not distinguish in his outward dispensations betwixt his own and others; yea, What though his judgments single out the best, and spare the worst? that though an *Abel* be killed in love, and a *Cain* survive in hatred, a bloody *Dionysius* dye in his bed, and a good *Josiah* fall in Battell? What

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though the belly of the wicked be filled with hid Treasures; and the teeth of the Saints broken with Gravel-stones, yet still here is much matter of praise; for electing love hath distinguished, though common Providence did not, and whilst prosperity and impunity slay the wicked, even slaying and adversity shall benefit and save the righteous.

5. Direct. *Believe, that how low soever the Church be plunged under the waters of adversity, it shall assuredly rise again.* Fear not, for as sure as Christ arose the third day, notwithstanding the Seal and Watch that was upon him; so sure the Church shall arise out of all her troubles, and lift up its victorious head above all its enemies: there's no fear of ruining that people that thrive by their losses; and multiply by being diminished. O be not too quick to bury the Church before she be dead! stay till Christ hath tryed his skill before you give it up for lost; the bush may be all in a flame, but shall never be consumed, and that because of the good will of him that dwelleth in the Bush.

6. Direct. *Record the famous instances of Gods care and tenderness over his people in former straits.* Christ hath not suffered

it to be devoured yet; for above these 1600 years the Christian Church hath lived in affliction, and yet it is not consumed: many a wave of persecution hath gone over it, and yet it is not drowned; many designs to ruine it, and hitherto none hath prospered: this is not the first time that *Hammans* and *Achitophels* have plotted its ruine; that an *Herod* hath stretcht out his hand to vex it. Still it hath been preserved from, supported under, or delivered out of all its troubles: and is it not as dear to God as ever? Is not he as able to save it now as formerly? though we know not whence Deliverance should arise, *Yet the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations*, 2 Per.

2. 9. *Direct.* If you can fetch no comfort from any of the former Arguments, then in the last place, try whether you cannot draw some comfort out of your very trouble. Surely this trouble of yours is a good argument of your integrity; union is the ground of sympathy, if you had not some rich adventure in that Ship, you would not tremble as you do when it is in danger: besides, this frame of spirit may afford you this argument, that if you be so sensible of the Churches troubles,

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Jesus Christ is much more sensible of, and sollicitous about it than you can be; and he will cast an eye of favour upon them that mourn for it, *Isa. 57. 18.*

4. *Season.* "The Fourth special Season for expressing our utmost diligence in keeping our hearts is the time of danger and publick distraction: in such times the best hearts are but too apt to be surprised by slavish fear, it is not easie to secure the heart against distraction in times of common destruction: if Syria be confederate with Ephraim, how do the hearts of the house of David shake, even as the trees of the wood which are shaken with the wind, *Isa. 7. 2.* when there are ominous signs in the heavens, on the earth distress of Nations, with perplexity; the Sea and waves roaring, then the hearts of Men shudder for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; *Duke 21. 25, 26.* even a Paul himself may sometimes complain of fightings within; when there are fears without; *2 Cor. 7. 5.*

But my Brethren these things ought not to be so: Saints should be of a more raised Spirit: so was David when his heart was kept in a good frame, *Psal 27. 1.*

The

The Lord is my light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? let none but the servants of sin be the slaves of fear, let them that have delighted in evil, fear evil, *impium tantum metuit, quantum nocuit.* O let not that which God hath threatened as a Judgment upon the wicked, ever seize upon the breasts of the righteous; I will send (saith God) faintness into their hearts in the land of their enemies, and the sound of a shaking leaf shall chase them, Lev. 26. 36. O what poor spirited men were these, to fly at a shaking leaf! which makes a pleasant, and not a terrible noise, and is in it self a kind of natural musick; but to a guilty Conscience, the whistling leaves are Drums and Trumpets: but God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of love, and of a sound mind, 2 Tim. 1. 7. A sound mind as it stands there in opposition to the spirit of fear, is an unwounded Conscience, not infirm'd by guilt: and this should make a man as bold as a Lyon. I know it cannot be said of a Saint, what God spake of *Leviathan*, that he is made without fear: there is a natural fear in every man, and it's as impossible to be wholly put off, as the body it self is: *'tis a pertur-*

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bation of the mind, rising from the apprehension of approaching danger; and as long as dangers can approach us, we shall find some perturbations within us. 'Tis not my purpose to commend to you a *Stoical apathy*, nor yet to take you off from such a degree of cautional preventive fear as may fit you for troubles, and be serviceable to your souls. There is a provident fear that opens our eyes to foresee danger, and quickens to a prudent and lawful use of means to prevent it; Such was *Jacobs fear*, *Gen. 32. 7, 9, 10, &c.* but it is the fear of diffidence. I perswade you to keep your hearts from that Tyrannical passion which invades the heart in times of danger, distracts, weakens, and unfits the heart for duty, drives men upon unlawful means, and brings a snare with it. Well then, the fourth Case will be this.

4. Case. "How a Christian may keep his heart from distracting and tormenting fears in times of great and threatening dangers."

Now there are fourteen excellent Rules or helps for the keeping of the heart from fearful fear when eminent dangers threaten us: and the first is this,

1. Rule. Look upon all the Creatures as

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in the hand of God, who manages them in all their motions; limiting, restraining, and determining them all at his pleasure.

Get this great truth well settled by faith in your hearts it will marvelously guard them against slavish fears, the 1. of *Ezek.* contains an admirable *seem* or draught of Providence; there you may see the living Creatures who move the wheels, viz. the great affairs and turnings of things here below, coming unto Christ, who sits upon the Throne to receive new orders and instructions from him, *ver. 24, 25, 26.* and in *Rev. 6.* you read of white, black, and red Horses, which are nothing else but the instruments which God employs in executing his Judgments in the World, as Wars, Pestilence and Death; but when these Horses are prancing and trampling up and down the world; here is that may quiet our hearts, that God hath the Reins in his hand. Wicked men are sometimes like mad Horses, they would stamp the people of God under their feet but that the bridle of Providence is in their Lips, *Joh. 1. 11, 12.* A Lion at liberty is terrible to meet, but who is afraid of the Lion in the Keepers hand.

2. Rule. Remember that this God is
whose

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whose hand all the Creatures are, is your Father, and is much more tender over you than you are or can be over your selves: He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine Eye, Zech. 2. 8. Let me ask the most timorous Woman, whether there be not a vast difference betwixt the sight of a drawn sword in the hand of a bloody Ruffian, and the same sword in the hand of her own tender Husband? as great a difference there is in looking upon Creatures by an eye of sense, and looking on them as in the hand of your God by an Eye of Faith; that is a sweet Scripture to this purpose, Isa. 54. 5. *Thy Maker is thine Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his Name;* He is Lord of all the Hosts of Creatures in the world: who would be afraid to pass through an Army, though all the Souldiers should turn their Swords and Guns towards him, if the General of that Army were his friend or father? I have met with an excellent Story of a religious young man, who being at Sea with many other Passengers in a great storm, and they being half dead with fear, he only was observed to be very chearful, as if he had been but little concerned in that danger; one of them demanding a reason of his chearfulness,

Oh,

Oh, said he, 'tis because the Pilot of the ship is my father. Consider Christ, first as the King and Supreme Lord over the Providential Kingdome, and then as your Head, Husband and Friend, and thou wilt quickly say, *Return unto thy rest O my Soul.* This truth will make you cease trembling, and fall a Singing in the midst of dangers, *Psalm 47. 7. The Lord is King of all the earth, sing ye Praise with understanding,* or as the Hebrew is, everyone that hath understanding, viz. of this Heart reviving and establishing Doctrine of the Dominion of our Father over all the Creatures.

3. Rule. Urge upon your hearts the express prohibition of Christ in this Case; and let your hearts stand in awe of the violations of them.

He hath charged you not to fear, *Luke 21. 9. When ye shall hear of Wars and commotions, see that ye be not terrified. And Phil. 1. 28. In nothing be terrified by your adversaries: yea in Mat. 10. 26, 8, 31. and within the compass of six verses, our Saviour commands us thrice, not to fear man. Doth every big word of proud dust and ashes make thee afraid? Doth the voice of a Man make thee tremble? and shall not the voice of God? If thou art*

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art of such a fearful and timorous spirit; how is it that thou fearest not to disobey the flat Commands of *Iesus Christ*? Methinks the command of *Christ* should have as much power to calm, as the voice of a poor worm to terrify thy heart, *Isa.* 51. 12, 13. *even I am he that comforteth you, who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die? and of the Son of Man that shall be made as the grass, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker? We cannot fear Creatures sinfully, till we have forgotten God; did we remember what he is, and what he hath said, we should not be of such feeble spirits: bring thy heart then to this Dilemma in times of danger; If I let into my heart the slavish fear of Man, I must let out the reverential awe and fear of God: and dare I cast off the fear of the Almighty for the frowns of a man? shall I lift up proud dust above the great God? shall I run upon a certain sin, to shun a probable danger? Oh keep thy heart by that consideration.*

4. Rule. Remember how much needless trouble your vain fears have brought upon you formerly, and how you have disquieted your selves to no purpose.

Isa. 51. 13. *And hast feared continual-*

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ly because of the oppressor, as if he were ready to devour: and where is the fury of the Oppressor? He seem'd ready to devour, but yet you are not devoured; I have not brought upon you the thing that ye feared; you have wasted your spirits, disordered your Souls, and weakened your hands, and all this to no purpose. You might have all this while enjoyed your peace, and possessed your souls in patience. And here I cannot but observe a very deep policy of Satan managing a design against the Soul by these vain fears: I call them vain in regard of the frustration of them by providence, but certainly they are not in vain as to the end Satan aims at in raising them, for herein he acts as Souldiers use to do in the Siege of a Garrison, who on purpose to wear out the besieged by constant watchings, and thereby unfit them to make resistance when they storm it in earnest, do every night give them false Allarms, which though they come to nothing yet do notably serve this further design of the enemy. O when will you beware of Satans devices.

** 3. Rule, Consider solemnly, That though the things you fear should really fall out, yet there is more evil in your own fear than in the thing feared.*

And

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And that not only as the least evil of sin, is worse than the greatest evil of suffering; but as this sinful fear hath really more torment and trouble in it than is in that condition you are so much afraid of, fear is both a multiplying and a tormenting passion. it represents troubles much greater than they are, and so tortures and wracks the Soul much worse than when the suffering it self comes. So it was with *Israel* at the Red Sea, they cryed out, and were sore afraid till they put foot into the water, and then a passage was opened through those waters which they thought would have drowned them. Thus it is with us, we looking through the glass of a carnal fear, upon the waters of trouble, the swellings of *Jordan*, cry out; Oh they are unfootable! we must needs perish in them: but when we come into the midst of those Floods indeed, we find the Promise made good, *God will make a way to escape*, *1 Cor. 10. 13*. Thus it was with blessed *Bilney*, when he would make a tryal by putting his finger to the Candle, and not able to endure that, he cryed out, What, cannot I bear the burning of a finger? How then shall I be able to bear the burning of my whole body to morrow? and yet

yet when that morrow came, he could go cheerfully into the flames with that Scripture in his mouth, *Isa. 43. 1, 2, 3.* Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt.

6. Rule. Consult the many precious promises which are written for your support and comfort in all dangers.

These are your refuges to which you may flye and be safe; when the arrows of danger flye by night, and destruction wasteth at noon day. There are particular Promises suited to particular Cases and exigencies, and there are general Promises reaching all Cases and Conditions: such are these, *Rom. 8. 28.* All things shall work together for good, &c. And *Eccles. 8. 12.* Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his dayes be prolonged, yet it shall be well with them that fear the Lord, &c. Could you but believe the Promises, your hearts should be established, *2 Chron. 20. 20.* Could you but please them with God, as *Jacob* did, *Gen. 32. 12.* Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, &c. they would relieve you in every distress.

Object. But that promise was made personally

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sonally and by name to him, so are not these to
me.

Ans. If *Jacobs* God be your God, you
have as good an interest in them as he had.
The Church a thousand yeares after that
transaction betwixt God and *Jacob*, ap-
plied that which God spake to him, as if it
had been spoken to themselves, *Hos.* 12. 1.
He found him in Bethel, and there he spake
with us.

7. Rule. *Quiet your trembling hearts by*
recording and consulting your past experi-
ences of the care and faithfulness of God in
former distresses.

These experiences are food for your
Faith in a wilderness condition, *Psal.* 74.
14. By this *David* kept his heart in time
of danger, *1 Sam.* 17. 37. and *Paul* his,
2 Cor. 1. 10. It was sweetly answered by
Silentiarius, when one told him, that his
enemies way-laid him to take away his
life, *Si Deus mei curam non habet, quid vi-*
vo? if God take no care of me, how have
I escaped hitherto? you may plead with
God old experiences to procure new
ones, for it is in pleading with God for
new deliverances, as it is in pleading for
new pardons. Now mark how *Moses*
pleads on that account with God, *Numb.*
14. 19. *Pardon I beseech thee the Iniquity*
of

in times of common distraction. 81

of this people, as thou hast forgiven them from Egypt until now. He doth not say as men do, Lord this is the first fault, thou hast not been troubled before to sign their pardon: but Lord, because thou hast pardoned them so often; I beseech thee pardon them once again. So in new straits, Lord thou hast often heard, helped and saved, in former fears, therefore now help again, for with thee there is plenteous redemption, and thine arme is not shortened

8. Rule. *Be well satisfied that you are in the way of your duty, and that will breed holy courage in times of danger.*

Who will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good? 1 Pet. 3.13. Or, if any dare attempt it, you may boldly commit your selves to God in well-doing, 1 Pet. 4. 19. 'Twas this consideration that raised Luthers Spirit above all fear: In the cause of God (said he) I ever am, and ever shall be stout; herein I assume this Title, Cedo nulli, a good cause will bear up a mans spirit bravely. Hear the saying of a Heathen to the shame of cowardly Christians: When the Emperour Vespasian had commanded Fludius Priscus not to come to the Senate, or if he did to speak

Char. of Wisdom. p. 358.

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nothing

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nothing but what he would have him; The Senator returned this noble Answer: *That as he was a Senator, it was fit he should be at the Senate; and if being there he were required to give his advice, he would speak freely that which his Conscience commanded him; the Emperour threatening, that then he should die.* He answered, *Did I ever tell you that I was immortal? Do you what you will, and I will do what I ought; it is in your power to put me to death unjustly, and in me to dye constantly.*

Righteousness is a Breast-plate, the Cause of God will pay all your expences, let them tremble whom danger finds out of the way of duty.

2. Rule. *Get your Consciences sprinkled with the blood of Christ from all guilt; and that will set your hearts above all fear.*

'Tis guilt upon the conscience that softens and cowardizes our spirits, *The righteous is bold as a Lyon.* Prov. 28. 1. 'Twas guilt in Cains Conscience that made him cry, *Everyone that meets me will slay me;* Gen. 4. 14. A guilty Conscience is more terrified with conceited dangers, than a pure Conscience is with real ones. A guilty sinner carries a witness against himself in his own bosome. 'Twas guilty Herod cryed out, *John Baptist is risen from*

from the dead. Such a conscience is the Devils Anvil, on which he fabricates all those Swords and Spears, with which the guilty sinner pierces and wounds himself. Guilt is to danger, what fire is to Gunpowder; a man need not fear to walk among many barrels of Powder, if he have no fire about him.

10. Rule. *Exercise holy trust in times of great distress.*

Make it your business to trust God with your lives and comforts, and then your hearts will be at rest about them. So did David, *Psal. 57. 3. At what time I am afraid I will trust in thee*, q. d. Lord, if at any time a storme rise, I will make bold to shelter from it under the Covert of thy wings. Go to God by acts of faith and trust, and never doubt but he will secure you, *Isa. 62. 3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee; God takes it well when thou comest to him thus; Father, my life, my liberty, or estate are hunted after, and I cannot secure them: O let me leave them in thy hand; the poor leaveth himself with thee: and, Doth this God fail him? no, Thou art the helper of the Fatherless, Psalm. 10. 14. that is, Thou art the helper of the destitute one*

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that hath none to go to but God. And that is a sweet Scripture, *Psalms. 112. 7. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord: he doth not say, his ear shall be priviledged from the report of evil tidings, he may hear as sad tidings as other men; but his heart shall be priviledged from the terrour of those tidings, his heart is fixed.*

11. Rule. *Consult the honour of Religion more, and your personal safety less.*

Is it for the honour of Religion, (think you) that Christians should be as timorous as Hares, to start at every sound? Will not this tempt the World to think, that whatever you talk, yet your Principles are no better than other Mens? O what mischief may the discoveries of your fears before them do? 'Twas a noble saying of *Nehemiah, Chap. 6. 11. Should such a man as I flee? and who being as I am should flee?* Were it not better you should dye, than that the World should be prejudiced against Christ by your example? for alas! How apt is the World (who judge more by what they see in your practises, than by what they understand of your principles) to conclude from your timorousness, that how much soever you commend Faith, and
talk

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talk of Assurance, yet you dire trust to these things no more than they, when it comes to the trial. O let not your seares lay such a stumbling block before the blind world.

12. Rule. *He that will secure his heart from fear, must first secure the eternal interest of his soul in the hands of Jesus Christ.*

When this is done, then you may say, *Now World do thy worst.* You will not be very solicitous about a vile body, when you are once assured it shall be well to all eternity with your precious Souls. *Fear not them (saith Christ) that can kill the body, and after that have no power that they can do.* The assured Christian may smile with contempt upon all his enemies, and say, Is this the worst that you can do? What say you Christians? Are you assured that your souls are safe, that within a few moments of your dissolution they shall be received by Christ into everlasting habitations? Well, if you be sure of that, never trouble your selves about the instruments and means of your dissolution.

Obj^t. *O, but a violent death is terrible to Nature.*

Ans^r. But what matter is it, when thy

soul is in Heaven? Whether it were let out at thy mouth, or at thy throat? whether thy familiar friends, or barbarous enemies stand about thy dead body, and close thine eyes? alas, it is not worth the making so much ado about, *nihil corpus sentit in nervo cum anima sit in celo*; thy Soul shall not be sensible in Heaven, how thy Body is used on Earth? no, it shall be swallowed up in life.

13. Rule. *Learn to quench all fleshly Creature fears, in the reverential fear of God.*

This is a cure by diversion: 'tis a rare piece of Christian wisdom to turn those passions of the soul which most predominate into spiritual Channels, to turn natural anger into spiritual zeal, natural mirth into holy chearfulness, and natural fear into an holy dread and awe of God. This method of Cure Christ prescribes in that forementioned place, *Mat. 10.* like to which is that in *Isa. 8. 12, 13.* *Fear not their fear*: But, How shall we help it? Why, *sanctifie the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear and your dread.* Natural fear may be allayed for present by natural reason, or the removal of the occasion, but then 'tis but like a Candle blown out with a puff of breath,

How to keep the heart from fears, By

breath, which is easily blown in again, but if the fear of God extinguish it, then 'tis like a Candle quencht in water, which cannot easily be re-kindled.

14. Rule. Lastly, *Pour out those fears to God in Prayer, which the Devil and your own unbelief, pour in upon you in times of danger.*

Prayer is the best out-let to fear: where is the Christian that cannot set his *probatum est* to this direction? I will give you the greatest Example in the World to encourage you in the use of it, even the example of Jesus Christ, *Mark* 14. 32. When the hour of his danger and death drew nigh; He gets into the Garden, separates from the Disciples, and there wrestles mightily with God in Prayer, even unto an Agony: in reference to which the Apostle saith, *Heb.* 5. 7. *Who in the daies of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong cries and teares, to him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared: he was heard as to strength and support to carry him through it, though not as to deliverance, or exemption from it.*

Now, Oh that these things might abide with you, and be reduced to pra-

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rise in these evil dayes, that many trembling souls may be established by them.

5. *Seas.* "The fifth Season to excite
"this diligence in keeping the heart, is
"the time of straits and outward pinch-
"ing wants; although at such times
"we should complain to God, and not of
"God, (the Throne of Grace being e-
"rected for a time of need, *Heb. 4. 16.*
"yet when the waters of relief run low,
"and wants begin to pinch hard: how
"prone are the best hearts to distrust the
"Fountain! when the Meal in the Bar-
"rel, and Oyle in the Cuse are almost
"spent, our faith and patience are almost
"spent too: Now 'tis difficult to keep
"down the proud and unbelieving
"heart in an holy quietude and sweet
"submission at the foot of God. 'Tis an
"easie thing to talk of trusting God for
"daily bread while we have a full Barn
"or Purse; but to say as the Prophet,
"*Hab. 3. 17. Though the Fig-tree should*
"*not blossome, neither fruit be in the Vine,*
"*&c. yet will I rejoyce in the Lord.* Sure
this is not easie. The fifth Case therefore
shall be this.

5. Case. *How a Christian may keep his
heart from distrusting God, or repining a-
gainst him when outward wants are either
felt or feared.*

This

This Case deserves to be seriously pondered, and especially to be studied now; since it seems to be the design of Providence to empty the people of God of their creature fulness, and acquaint them with those straits which hitherto they have been altogether strangers to.

Now to secure the heart from the fore-mentioned danger attending this condition, these following Considerations through the blessing of the Spirit may prove effectual. And the first is this:

1. Confid. *That if God reduce you to straits and necessities, yet he deals no otherwise therein with you; than he hath done with some of the choicest and holiest men that ever lived.*

Your condition is not singular, though you have hitherto been strangers to wants, other Saints have daily conversed, and been familiarly acquainted with them. Hear what blessed *Paul* speaks, not of himself only, but in the names of other Saints reduced to like exigencies, *1 Cor. 4. 11. Even to this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and buffeted; and have no certain dwelling place. To see such a Man as Paul going up and down the VWorld with a naked back, and empty belly, and not a house,*

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house to put his head in, one that was so far above thee in Grace and Holiness, one that did more service for God in a day, than perhaps thou hast done him all thy dayes, and yet thou repine as if hardly deaft with! Have you forgot what necessities and straits, even a *David* hath suffered? How great were his straits and necessities? *1 Sam. 25. 8. Give I pray thee, (saith he to Nabal) whatsoever cometh to thy hand, to thy Servants and to thy Son David.* Renowned *Musculus* was forced to dig in the Town-ditch for a maintenance. Famous *Ainsworth* (as I have been credibly informed) forced to sell the Bed he lay on to buy Bread. But what speak I of these: behold a greater than any of them, even the Son of God, who is the Heir of all things, and by whom the worlds were made: yet sometime would have been glad of any thing, having nothing to eat, *Mark 11. 12. And on the morrow when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry; and seeing a fig-tree a far off, having leaves, he came if happily he might find [any thing] thereon.*

Well then, Hereby God hath set no mark of hatred upon you; neither can you infer the want of love from the want of bread. When thy repining heart puts the

the question, Was there ever any sorrow like unto mine? Ask these Worthies, and they will tell thee, though they did not complain and fret as thou dost, yet they were driven to as great straits as thou art.

2. Confid. If God leave you not in this necessities condition without a Promise, you have no reason to repine or despond under it.

That is a sad condition indeed, to which no Promise belongs. I remember Mr. Calvin upon those words, Isa. 9. 1. *Nevertheless, the darkness shall not be such as was in her vexation, &c.* Salves the doubt, in what sense the darkness of the Captivity was not so great, as the lesser incursions made by Tiglath Pileser. In the Captivity the City was destroyed, and the Temple burnt with fire, there was no comparison in the affliction; but yet the darkness should not be such, and the reason (saith he) is this, *huic certam promissionem esse additam, cum in prioribus nulla esset*, (i. e.) there was a certain Promise made to this, but none to the other.

'Tis better to be as low as Hell with a Promise, than in Paradise without one. Even the darkness of Hell it self would be comparatively no darkness at all, were

2 How the heart may be kept, &c.

were there but a Promise to enlighten it. Now God hath left many sweet Promises for the Faith of his poor people to feed on in this condition, such are these: Psalm 34. 9. 10. O fear the Lord ye his Saints, for there is no want to them that fear him; the Lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that fear the Lord shall want nothing that is good. Psal. 33. 18, 19. The eye of the Lord is upon the righteous, to keep them alive in famine. Psal. 48. 11. No good thing will be withhold from them that walk uprightly. Rom. 8. 32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Isa. 41. 17. When the poor and the needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. Here you see, first their extream wants, water being put even for the necessities of life, (2) their certain relief, I the Lord will hear them; in which it is supposed, that they cry unto him in their straits; and he hears their cry.

Having therefore these Promises, Why should not your mistrustful hearts conclude like David's, Psal. 23. 1. The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.

Object. But these Promises imply conditions;

under outward straits and wants. 93

tions, if they were absolute, they would afford more satisfaction.

Sol. What are those tacite conditions you speak of, but these? (1.) That either he will supply or sanctifie your wants; (2) That you shall have so much as God sees fit for you, and doth this trouble you? Would you have the Mercy whether sanctified or no? Whether God sees it fit for you or no? Methinks the appetites of Saints after earthly things should not be so ravenous, to seize greedily upon any enjoyment, nor caring how they have it.

But oh, when wants Pinch, and we see not whence supplies should come, then our faith in the Promise shakes, and we like murmuring *Israel* cry, *He gave bread, can he give water also?* O unbelieving hearts! When did his Promises fail? Wo ever trusted them and was ashamed? May not God upbraid thee with thine unreasonable infidelity, as *Jer. 2. 31.* *Have I been a wilderness unto you, &c.* or as Christ said to the Disciples, *Since I was with you, lacked ye any thing?* Yea, may you not upbraid your selves, may you not say with good old *Polycarp*, that many yeares I have served Christ, and found him a Good Master; indeed he
may

may deny what your *wantonness*, but not what your real *wants* call for: he will not regard the cry of your lusts, nor yet despise the cry of your faith; though he will not indulge and humour your *wanton appetites*, yet he will not violate his own *faithful Promises*. These Promises are your best security for *eternal life*, and 'tis strange if they should not satisfy you for *daily bread*: remember ye the words of the Lord, and solace your hearts with them amidst all your wants. 'Tis said of *Epicurus*, that in the dreadful fits of the Collick, he often refreshed himself *ab memoriam inventorum*, by calling to mind his inventions in Philosophy; and of *Possidonius* the Philosopher, that in a great fit of the stone, he solaced himself with discourses of Moral Vertue; and when the pain twinged him, he would say, *nihil agis dolor quamvis sis molestus nunquam confitebor te esse malum*: O pain, thou dost nothing, though thou art a little troublesome, I will never confess thee to be evil. If upon such grounds as these they could support themselves under such grinding and racking pains, and even delude their diseases by them; how much rather should the precious Promises of God, and the sweet Experiences which
have

have gone along step by step with them, make you to forget all your wants; and comfort you over every strait!

3. Confid. *If it be bad now, it might have been worse; hath God denyed thee the comforts of this life; he might have denyed thee Christ, peace and pardon also, and then thy case had been woful indeed. You know God hath done so to Millions in the World: How many such wretched objects may your eyes behold every day, that have no comfort in hand, nor yet in hope, are miserable here, and will be so to eternity; that have a bitter cup, and nothing to sweeten it, no, not so much as any hope that it will be better. But it is not so with you, though you be poor in this World, yet rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdome which God hath promised, James 2. 5. O learn to set spiritual riches over against temporal poverty! Balance all your present troubles with your spiritual priviledges. Indeed, if God had denyed your souls the Robes of Righteousness to cloath them, the hidden Manna to feed them; the heavenly Mansions to receive them, if your Souls were left destitute, as well as your bodies, you might well be pensive; but this consideration hath enough to bring the consider-*
ing

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dering Soul to rest under any outward
Rrait. 'Twas bravely said by Luther,
when want began to pinch him, let us be
contented with our hard fare (said he) for
do we not feast with Angels upon Christ the
bread of life? And blessed be God (saith
Paul) who hath abounded to us in all spi-
ritual blessings, Eph. 1. 3.

4. *Confid.* This affliction, though great,
is not such an affliction but God hath far
greater, with which he chastises the dearly
beloved of his Soul in this world, and should
he remove this, and inflict those, you would
account your present state a very comforta-
blest one, and bless God to be as now you are.

VWhat think you Sirs? Should God re-
move your present troubles, supply all
your outward wants, give you the desire
of your hearts in Creature-Comforts, but
hide his face from you, shoot his arrows
into your souls, and cause the venome of
them to drink up your Spirits? Should he
leave you but a few dayes to the Buf-
feting of Satan and his blasphemous in-
jections? Should he hold your eyes but
a few nights waking with horrors of
Conscience, tossing to and fro till the
dawning of the day? Should he lead you
through the Chambers of death? Shew
you the visions of darkness? and make
his

his terrors set themselves in array against you, then tell me if you would not count it a choice mercy to be back again in your former necessitous condition, with peace of Conscience; and count bread and water with Gods favour, a happy state? O then! take heed of repining. Say not, God deals hardly with you, lest you provoke him to convince you by your own sense and feeling, that he hath worse Rods than these for unsubmissive and froward Children.

5. Confid. *If it be had now, it will be better shortly.*

O keep thy heart by that consideration! the Meal in the Barrel is almost spent; well, be it so, Why should that trouble me? If I am almost beyond the need and use of all these things. The Traveller hath spent almost all his Money, but a Shilling or two left, Well (saith he) though my money be almost spent, yet my journey is almost finish'd too; I am near home, and then shall be fully supplied. If there be no Candles in the house, yet 'tis a comfort to think that it's almost day, and then there will be no need of Candles, I am afraid Christian, thou mis-reckonest thy self, when thou thinkest; my provision is almost
H spent,

Spent, and I have a great way to travel, many years to live, and nothing to live upon; it may be not half so many as thou supposest; in this be confident, if thy provision be spent, either fresh supplies are coming (though thou see'st not from whence) or thou art nearer thy journey's end than thou reckonest thyself to be. Desponding Soul, doth it become a man or woman travelling upon the road to that Heavenly City, and almost arrived there, within a few days' Journey of his Father's House, where all his wants shall be supplied, to take on thus about a little Meat, drink or cloaths, which he fears he shall want by the way? it was a noble saying of the 40 *Martyrs*, famous in the *Ecclesiastical story*, when turned out naked in a frosty night to be starved to death; with these words they comforted one another *ὁ χειμὼν ὁ χεῖμας*, &c. the winter indeed is sharp and cold, but Heaven is warm and comfortable! here we shiver for cold, but *Abraham's* bosom will make amends for all.

Obj. 1. *But I may die for want.*

Sol. (1) Whoever did so? Where were the Righteous forsaken? (2) If so, your journey is ended, and you fully supplied.

Obj. 2. *But I am not sure of that, were*

I sure of Heaven, it were another matter.

Sol. Are you not sure of that? then you have other matters to trouble your selves about than these: Methinks, this should be the least of all your cares; I do not find that Souls perplexed and troubled about the want of Christ, pardon of sin, &c. are usually very anxious, or solicitous about these things. He that seriously puts such questions as these: What shall I do to be saved? How shall I know my sin is pardoned? Doth not usually trouble himself with What shall I eat, What shall I drink; or wherewithal shall I be cloathed?

6. *Confid.* Doth it become the children of such a Father to distrust his All-sufficiency, or repine against any of his dispensations?

Do you well to question his care and love upon every new exigence; say, have you not been ashamed of this formerly? hath not your Fathers seasonable provisions for you in former straits, put you to the blush? and made you resolve never to question his love and care any more, and yet will you renew your unworthy suspicions of him again? Disingenuous child, reason thus with thy self, if I perish for want of what is good

and needful for me, it must either be because my Father knows not my wants, or hath not wherewith to supply them: or else regards not what becomes of me. Which of these shall I charge upon him? not the first, for *Mark 6. 32. My Father knows what I have need of*, my condition is not hid from him: Nor the second, for *the earth is the Lords and the fulness of it*, Psalm. 24. 1. His Name is God All-sufficient, Gen. 17. 1. Not the last, for, *as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him*, Psal. 103. 13. *The Lord is exceeding pitiful, and of tender mercy*, James 5. 11. *He hears the young Ravens when they cry*, Job 38. 41. and will he not hear me? Consider (saith Christ) *the fowls of the Air*, Mat 6. 26. Not the fowls at the door, that are every day fed by hand, but the fowls of the Air, that have none to provide for them. Doth he feed and clothe his enemies, and will he forget his Children? He heard the very cry of *Ismael* in distress, Gen. 21. 17. O my unbelieving heart! Dost thou yet doubt? Remember *Hagar* and the Child.

7. Consid *Your poverty is not your sin, but your affliction only: if by sinful means you have not brought it upon your selves; and*
if

if it be but an affliction, it may be born the easier for that.

'Tis hard indeed to bear an affliction coming upon us as the fruit and punishment of sin, when men are under trouble upon that account; they use to say, O! if it were but a single affliction coming from the hand of God, by way of tryal, I could bear it, but I have brought it upon my self by sin, it comes as the punishment of sin; the marks of Gods displeasure are upon it, 'tis the guilt within that troubles and galls, more than the want without.

But it is not so here, and therefore you have no reason to be cast down under it.

Object. But though there be no sting of guilt, yet this condition wants not other stings: as first the discredit of Religion; I cannot comply with mine engagements in the world, and thereby religion is like to suffer.

Sol. 'Tis well you have an heart to discharge every duty, yet if God disable you by Providence, 'tis no discredit to your profession, because you do not that which you cannot do, so long as it is your desire, and endeavour to do what you can and ought to do, and in this case Gods will is, that lenity and forbearance be exercised towards you, *Deut. 24. 12, 13.*

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2. Object. *But it grieves me to behold the necessities of others whom I was wont to relieve and refresh, but now cannot.*

Sol. If you cannot it ceases to be your dutie, and God accepts the drawing out of your soul to the hungry in compassion and desire to help them, though you cannot draw forth a full purse to relieve and supplie them.

3. Obj. *But I find such a condition full of temptations, a sore clog in the way to Heaven.*

Sol. Every condition in the World, hath its clogs, and attending temptations; and were you in a prosperous condition, you might there meet with more temptations and fewer advantages than you now have: for though I confess povertry hath its temptations as well as prosperity, yet I am confident, prosperity hath not those excellent advantages that povertry hath; for here you have an opportunity to discover the sincerity of your love to God, when you can live upon him, find enough in him, and constantly follow him, even when all external inducements and motives fail. And thus I have shewed you how to keep your hearts from the temptations and dangers attending a poor and low condition

tion in the world, when want pinches and the heart begins to sink, then improve and bless God for these helps to keep it.

6. *Season.* "The sixth Season of expressing this diligence in keeping the heart, is the season of Duty; when we draw nigh to God in publick, private, or secret Duties, then 'tis time to look to the heart; for the vanity of the heart seldom discovers it self more than at such times. How oft doth the poor soul crie out, O Lord how fain would I serve thee, but vain thoughts will not let me; I came to open my heart to thee, to delight my soul in communion with thee, but my corruptions have set upon me: Lord rate off these vain thoughts, and suffer them not to prostitute the Soul, which is espoused to thee, before thy face. The sixth Case then is this.

6. *Case.* *How the heart may be kept from distractions by vain thoughts, in the time of Duty.*

There is a twofold distraction, or wandering of the heart in duty: (1) Voluntary and habitual, *Psal.* 78. 8. *They set not their hearts aright, and their spirit was not stedfast with God.* This is the case

of Formalists, and it proceeds from the want of an holy bent, and inclination of the heart to God; their hearts are under the power of their lusts, and therefore tis no wonder they go after their Lusts, even when they are about holy things; *Ezek. 33. 3.* (2.) Involuntary and lamented distractions, *Rom. 7. 21, 24.* *I find then a Law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me, O wretched man that I am, &c.* This proceeds not from the want of a holy bent and aim, but from the weakness and imperfection of grace. And in this case the soul may make the like complaint against its own corruptions that *Abijah* did against *Ieroboam*, *2 Chr. 13. 6, 7.* *Yet Jerobaam the Son of Nebat is risen up against his Lord, when Rehoboam was young and tender hearted, and could not withstand them, and there are gathered unto him vain men the children of Belial.* Grace hath a dominion, but lusts are mutinous and seditious, during the infancy thereof. But it is not my business to shew you how these distractions come into the heart, but rather how to get, and keep them out of the heart; in order whereto, take these ten following Helps.

1. *Help.* Sequester your selves from all earthly employments, and set apart some

some time for solemn preparation, to meet God in Duty: you cannot come reeking hot out of the world into Gods presence, but you will find a tang of it in your duties; it is with the heart a few Minutes since plunged in the world, now at the feet of God, just as with the Sea after a storm, which still continues working, muddy, and disquiet, though the wind be laid and storm over: thy heart must have some time to settle. There are few Musicians that can take down a Lute or Viol, and play presently upon it, without some time to tune it; there are few Christians can presently say, as *Psal. 57. 7. O God, my heart is fixed, it is fixed.* O when thou goest to God in any duty, take thy heart aside, and say, O my Soul! I am now addressing my self to the greatest work that ever a creature was imployed about: I am going into the awful presence of God about business of everlasting moment.

Oh my Soul! leave trifling now, be composed, watchful, serious, this is no common work, 'tis God-work, Soul-work, Eternity-work: I am now going forth bearing seed, which will bring forth fruit to life or death in the world to come; pause a while upon thy sins, wants, troubles,

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bles, keep thy thoughts a while in these before thou address thy self to Duty. *David first mused, and then spake with his tongue, Psal. 39. 3. 4. So Psal 45. 1. My heart is enditing, &c.*

2. *Help.* Having composed thy heart by previous meditation, presently set a guard upon thy senses; how often are poor Christians in danger of losing the eyes of their mind by those of their body, for this *Job* covenanted with his senses, Chap. 31. 1. for this *David* prayed, Ps. 119. 37. *turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way*: this may serve to expound that mystical *Arabian Proverb* which advises to shut the windows, that the house may be light: 'twere excellent if you could say in your onsets upon duty, as an holy one once did, when he came off from duty. *Claudimini, oculi mei claudimini, &c.* Be shut O my eyes be shut! for it is impossible you should ever see such beauty and glory in any Creature, as I have now seen in God. You had need avoid all occasions of distraction from without, for besure you will meet enough from within; intention of Spirit in the work of God locks up the eye and ear against vanity. When *Marcellus* entered the gates of *Syracuse*. *Archimedes*

was

was so intent about his Mathematical Schem, that he took no notice of the Souldiers when they entred his very Study with drawn swords; a *servant* cannot be a *vagrant* heart.

3. Help. *Beg of God a mortified fancy*, a working fancy (saith one) how much soever it be extol'd among men, is a great snare to the soul; except it work in fellowship with right reason, and a sanctified heart: the phantasie is a power of the Soul placed between the senses and the understanding, 'tis that which first stirs it self in the soul, and by its motion the other powers are stirred, 'tis the common shop where thoughts are first forged and framed, and as this is, so are they; if Imaginations be not first cast down, 'tis impossible that every thought of the heart should be brought into obedience to Christ, 2 Cor. 10. 5. this fancy is naturally the wildest and most untameable power in the soul. Some Christians (especially such as are of hot and dry constitutions) have much to do with it.

And truly, the more spiritual the heart is, the more 'tis troubled about the vanity and wildness of it. O what a sad thing it is! that thy nobler soul must lackey up and down after a vain roving fancy
tha

that such a beggar should on horse-back, and such a Prince run after it on foot; that it should call off the Soul from attendance upon God, when it is most sweetly engaged in communion with him: to prosecute such vanities as it will start at such times before it I beg earnestly of God that that the power of Sanctification may once come upon it. Some Christians have attained such a degree of Sanctification of their fancies, that they have had much sweetness left upon their hearts by the Spiritual workings of it in the night Season: when thy fancy is more mortified, thy thoughts will be more orderly and fixed.

4. Help. *If thou wouldst keep thy heart from those vain excursions, realize to thy self by faith, the holy and awful presence of God in duties.*

If the presence of a grave man will compose us to seriousness, how much more the presence of an holy God? thinkest thou, thy Soul durst be so giddy and light, if the sense of a divine eye were upon it? remember the place where thou art, is the place of his feet. *Isa. 60. 13. A Faith upon the Omnipresency of God, All the Churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the heart, and tryeth*

tryeth the reins, and will give to every one of you according to your workes; *Rev. 2. 23.* All things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do, *Heb. 4. 12.* realize his infinite holiness; into what a serious composed frame did the sight of God in his holiness put the Spirit of the Prophet, *Isa. 6. 5.* labour to get also upon thy heart due apprehensions of the greatness of God, such as *Abraham* had, *Gen. 18. 27.* *I that am but dust and ashes, have taken upon me to speak to God:* And lastly remember the jealousy of God, how tender he is over his worship, *Lev. 10. 3.* And *Moses* said unto *Aaron*, *this is that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.*

A man that is praying (saith Bernard) should behave himself as if he were entering into the Court of Heaven, where he sees the Lord upon his Throne, surrounded with ten thousand of his Angels, and Saints ministering unto him. When thou comest from a duty, in which the heart hath been toying and wandring, thou mayst say, verily God was in this place, and I knew it not. Suppose all the impertinencies and vanities which have past through thine heart in a duty were written out, and

and enterlined with thy petitions, couldst thou have the face to present it to God? should thy tongue but utter all the thoughts of thy heart in Prayer, Would not men abhor thee? Why, thy thoughts are vocal to God, *Psal. 139. 2.* If thou wert Petitioning the King for thy life, would it not provoke him to see thee playing with thy band-sirings, or catching every lythat lights upon thy cloaths, whiles thou art speaking to him about such serious matters? O think sadly upon this scripture, *Psal. 87. 7. God is Greatly to be feared in the Assemblies of his Saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him.* Why did God descend in thundrings and lightnings, and dark clouds upon *Sinai. Exod. 19. 16, 18.* Why did the Mountains smoake under him? the people quake and tremble round about him, yea *Moses* himself not exempted; but to teach the people that great truth, *Heb. 12. 28, 29. Let us have grace, whereby we may serve him acceptably with reverence and Godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire:* present God thus before thee, and thy vain heart will quickly be reduced to a more serious frame.

5. *Help. Maintain a praying frame of heart in the intervals of duty:* What is the reason

reason our hearts are so dull, careless and wandring, when we come to hear or pray, but because there have been such long intermissions in our communion with God; by reason whereof the heart is out of a praying frame: if that spiritual warmth, those holy impressions we carry from God in one duty, were but preserved to kindle another duty, it would be of marvellous advantage to keep the heart intent, and serious with God.

To this purpose those intermediate ejaculations, betwixt stated and solemn duties, are of most sweet and excellent use; by these, one duty is as it were linked to another, and so the soul as it were wraps up it self in a chain of duties. That Christian seldome misses his mark in solemn duty, that shoots up many of these darts in the interval of duty; 'tis an excellent commendation Christ bestows upon the Spouse, *Cant. 4. 11. Thy lips O my Spouse drop as the hony Comb*: upon which Text one gives this sweet note, the hony Comb drops actually but sometimes, but it alwayes hangs full of sweet drops ready to fall: if our ejaculations were more, our lamentations upon this account would be fewer.

6. Help. Endeavour to ingage and raise thy affections to God in duty if thou wouldst have thy distractions cured.

A dropping eye and a melting heart, are seldom troubled as others upon this account: when the soul is intent about any work, it gathers in its strength, and bends all the thoughts about it; and when it's deeply affected, it will be intent; the affections command the thoughts to go after them, deadness causes distraction, and distraction increases deadness; could you but look upon duties as the Galleries of communion in which you walk with God, where your Souls may be filled with those ravishing, and matchless delights that are in his presence, your Soul would not offer to stir from thence.

It is with the heart in duty, as it is with those that dig for Gold Oare; they trie here, and finding none, try there; and so go from place to place, till at last they hit upon the rich Vein, and there they sit down. If thy heart could but once hit the rich Vein in duty, it would dwell and abide there with delight and constancy. *O how I love thy Law, it is my Meditation day and night!*
Psal. 119. 97. The Soul could dwell
 day

day and night upon its knees, when once its Delights, Loves, and Desires are engaged. What's the reason your hearts are so shuffling, especially in secret duties? Why are you ready to be gone almost as soon as you are come into the presence of God? but because your affections are not engaged.

7. *Help: Mourn over the matter to God, and call in assistance from Heaven; when vain thoughts assault thy heart in Duty.*

When the Messenger of Satan buffeted *Paul* by wicked injections, as is supposed, he goes to God, and Mourns over it before him, 2 Cor. 12. 8. Never slight wandering thoughts in duty as small matters; follow every vain thought with a deep sigh, turn thee to God with such words as these, Lord I came hither to speak with thee, and here a busie Devil, and a vain heart conspiring together, have set upon me. O my God, what an heart have I? shall I never wait upon thee without distraction! when shall I enjoy an Hour of free Communion with thee? help me my God this once, do but display thy glory before mine Eyes; and my heart shall quickly be recovered; Thou knowest I came hither to enjoy thee, and shall I go away without thee!

I

See,

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See, how the heart of thy poor Child
works towards thee! Strives to get near
thee but cannot: my heart is aground,
come thou North wind, blow South wind, O
for a fresh gale now from thy Spirit, to
set my affections aloft! couldst thou
but thus affectionately be-vail they distra-
ctions to God, thou mightest obtain help
and diliverance from them: He would
lay to Satan, and thine imperious Lusts
as *Ahasuerus* laid of *Haman*, what will he
force the Queen before my face? Who
are these, that set upon my Child in my
Work, and presence?

8. Help. Look upon the success and sweet-
ness of thy duties, as very much depending
upon the keeping of thy heart close with God
in them.

These two things, the success, and
sweetness of duty, are as dear to a Chri-
stian as his two Eyes, and both of these
must necessarily be lost, if the heart be
lost in duty. *Job* 35. 13. Surely God
heareth not vanity, neither doth the Almighty
regard it: the Promise is made to an heart
engaged, *Jer.* 29. 13. when shall you seek
me, and find me, when ye shall search for
me with all your heart. Well then, when
thou findest thy heart under the power
of deadness and distraction, say to thy
Soul,

Soul, O what do I lose by a careless heart now! my praying times are the choicest parts, the Golden spots of all my time: could I but get up this heart with God, I might now obtain such mercies as would be matter for a song to all eternity.

9. Help. Look upon it as a great discovery of the sincerity, or hypocrisie of your hearts according as you find them, careful, or careless in this matter.

Nothing will startle an upright heart more than this: What, shall I give way to a customary wandering of heart from God? shall the spot of the Hypocrite appear upon my Soul? they indeed can drudge on in the round of duty, never regarding the frames of their hearts, Ezek. 33. 31. 32. but shall I do so? when men come into the presence Chamber, and the King is not there, they bow to the empty Chair. O never let me be satisfied with empty duties! never let me take my leave of a duty, until mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.

10. Help. Lastly, it will be of special use to keep thine heart with God in duties, to consider what influence all thy duties have into thine eternity.

These are your seed times, and what

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you sow in your duties in this World you must look to reap the fruit of it in another World, *Gal. 6. 7. 8.* if you sow to the flesh, of that you shall reap corruption: but if to the spirit, life everlasting. O my Soul, answer seriously; wouldst thou be willing to reap the fruit of vanity, in the World to come? darest thou say, when thy thoughts are roving to the ends of the Earth in Duty, when thou scarce mindest what thou sayest or hearest, now Lord, I am sowing to the Spirit, now I am providing and laying up for eternity, now I am seeking for Glory, Honour, and immortality, now I am striving to enter in at the strait Gate, now I am taking the Kingdom of Heaven by an holy violence? O such a consideration as this, should make the multitudes of vain thoughts that press in upon thy heart in duty, to fly seven Wayes before it: and thus I have shewn you, how to keep your hearts, in the times of duty.

7. *Season.* "The seventh season calling formeore then common diligence
"to keep the heart is, when we receive
"injuries and abuses from men, such is
"the depravedness and corruption of
"man in his collapsed state, that *nemo*
" *homini*

3^d *hominis lupus*, one man is become a Wolfe,
 " a Tyger to another: they are as the
 " Prophet complains, *Hab. 1. 14. As the*
 " *Fishes of the Sea, and as the creeping things*
 " *that have no Ruler over them, and as wick-*
 " *ed men are cruel and oppressive one*
 " *to another, so they conspire together*
 " *to abuse and wrong the people of God,*
 " *as the same Prophet complains, v. 13.*
 " *the wicked devoureth the man that is more*
 " *righteous than he.* Now when we are
 " thus abused and wronged, 'tis hard to
 " keep the heart from revengefull moti-
 " ons: to make it meekly and quietly to
 " commit the cause to him that judgeth
 " righteously, to exercise no other affe-
 " ction but pity towards them that abuse
 " us. Surely the Spirit that is in us lust-
 " eth to revenge, but it must not be so:
 " you have choice helps in the Gospel to
 " keep down your hearts from such sin-
 " full motions against your enemies, and
 " to sweeten your embittered Spirits. The
 seventh Case therefore shall be this.

7. Case. *How a Christian may keep his heart from revengfull motions, under the greatest injuries and abuses from men?*

The Gospel indeed allows a liberty to vindicate our innocency, and assert our rights; but not to vent our corruptions,

and invade Gods right, when therefore thou findest thy heart begin to be inflamed by revengefull motions, presently apply the following Remedies; and the first is this.

1. Remedy. *Urge upon the heart the severe prohibitions of revenge by the Law of God.* Remember that this is forbidden fruit, how pleasing and luscious soever it be to our vitiated appetites: O saith nature, revenge is sweet; O but saith God, the effects thereof shall be bitter: how plainly hath God interdicted this flesh-pleasing sin, *Prov. 29. 22. Say not, I will recompence evil. Pro. 24. 29. Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me. Rom. 12. 17. Recompence to no man evil for evil. and v. 19. Avenge not your selves but rather give place to wrath: Nay that's not all, but Prov. 25. 21. If thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink.* The word feed him, as Criticks observe, signifies to feed cheerfully and tenderly, as birds do their young ones: The Scripture is a great friend to the peace and tranquility of humane Societies, which can never be preserved if revenge be not deposed; it was wont to be an argument urged by the Christians to prove their Religion to be supernatural and

and pite, that it forbids revenge which is so sweet to Nature, and verily tis a thousand pities such an argument should be lost. Well then awe your hearts with the authority of God in these Scriptures: and when carnal reason saith, mine enemy deserves to be hated, let Conscience reply, but doth God deserve to be disobeyed? thus, and thus he hath done, and so he hath wronged me; but what hath God done that I should wrong him? if he dare be so bold to break the *prece*, shall I be so wicked to break the *Precepts*? if he fears not to wrong me; shall not I fear to wrong God? O let the fear of Gods threatnings repress such sinful motions.

2. Retried. *Set before your eyes the most eminent patterns of meekness and forgiveness, that your Souls may fall in love with it.*

This is the way to cut off those common pleas of the Flesh for revenge: as thus, no man would bear such an affront; Yes, such and such have borne as bad and worse. I shall be reckoned a coward; a fool, if I pass by this: no matter, as long as I follow the examples of the wisest, and holiest of men: Never did any suffer more and great abuses from men, than Christ did, and never did any carry it

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more peaceably and forgivingly, Isa. 53. 7.
He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he
opened not his mouth; he is brought as a
Lamb to the slaughter &c. This patern the
Apostle sets before you for your imitation,
1. Pet. 2. 21. 22. 23. For even here-
unto are ye called, because Christ also suf-
fered for us, leaving us an example that we
should follow his steps: Who when he was re-
viled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he
threatned not; but committed himself to him
that judgeth righteously. To be of a meek
forgiving Spirit is Christ-like, God-like,
then shall you be the Children of your Father
which is in Heaven, for he maketh his Son
to rise upon the Evil, and upon the good, and
sendeth Rain on the just, and on the unjust,
Matth. 5. 45. How eminently also did
this Spirit of Christ rest upon his Apo-
stles; never were there such men up-
on Earth for true excellency of Spirit.
None were ever abused more, or suffered
their abuses better: Being reviled (say
they) we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it,
being defamed, we intreat, 1 Cor. 4. 12. 13.
Mr. Calvin though a man of a quick Spi-
rit, yet had attained such a degree of this
Christ-like forgiveness, that when Luther
had used some opprobrious language of
him, the good man said no more but this,
from I al-

although he should call me a Devil, yet I will acknowledge him to be an eminent Servant of Jesus Christ.

I have often heard it reported of Holy Mr. Dod, that when one, enraged at his close convincing Doctrine, pick't a quarrel with him, smote him on the face, and dashed out two of his teeth, this meek servant of Christ spat out the teeth, and bloud into his hand, and said, see here, you have knocked out two of my teeth, and that without any just provocation; but on condition I might do your Soul good, I would give you leave to dash out all the rest; Here is the Excellency of a Christians Spirit, above all the attainments of Moral Heathens: though they were excellent at many other things, yet they could never attain this forgiving Spirit: it is the first office of justice (said Tully) to hurt no body, unless first provoked by an injury, whereupon *Demetrius*, *O quam simplicem veramque sententiam duorum verborum, adjectione corripit!* What a dainty Sentence spoiled the Orator by adding those two last words! strive then for this excellency of Spirit, which is the proper excellency of Christians, do some singular thing that others cannot do, and then you will have a
 cessi-

testimony in their Consciences: When *Moses* out-did the *Magicians*, they were forced to confess the finger of God in that business.

3. Remedy. Consider well the quality of the person that hath wronged thee; either he is a good man or a wicked man that hath doth thee the injury: if he be a good man, there is light and tenderness in his Conscience, and that will bring him at last to a sense of the evil he hath done; however Christ hath forgiven him greater injuries than these, and why shouldest not thou? will not Christ upbraid him, with any of those wrongs done to him, but frankly forgive him all? and wilt thou take him by the throat for some petty abuse that he hath done to thee?

Or is he a wicked man? if so, truly you had more need to exercise pity than revenge towards him, and that upon a double account: for (1) He is beside himself, so indeed is every unconverted sinner, *Luke 15. 17.* should you go into *Bedlam* and there hear one rail at you, another mock you, and a third threaten you, would you say I would be revenged upon them? no, you would rather go away pitying them. Alas poor creatures they are out of their Wits, and know not what they

they do. Besides, (2) there is a day coming, if they repent not, when they will have more misery than you can find in your hearts to wish them: you need not study revenge; Gods vengeance sleepeth not, and will shortly take place upon them, and is not that enough? have they not an eternity of misery coming? if they repent not, this must be the portion of their cup, and if ever they do repent, they will be ready to make your reparation.

4. Rem. Keep down thy heart by this consideration, that by revenge thou canst but satisfy a lust, but by forgiveness thou shalt conquer a lust.

Suppose, by revenge thou shouldst destroy one enemy, I will shew thee how by forgiving thou shalt conquer three; thine own lusts, the Devils temptation, and thine enemies heart: and is not this a more glorious conquest? if by revenge thou overcome thine enemy, yet (as Bernard saith) *infelix victoria ubi superans virum, succumbit vitio*: unhappy victory, when by overcoming another man, thou art overcome by thine own corruption; but this way you may obtain a glorious conquest indeed. What an honourable and dry victory did David this way

way obtain over *Saul*, 1 Sam. 24. 16, 17. And it came to pass when *David* had made an end of speaking these words, that *Saul* lift up his voice and wept; and he said to *David*, thou art more righteous than I.

It must be a very dis-ingenuous nature indeed, upon which meekness and forgiveness will not work, a stony heart which this fire will not melt; To this sense is that, *Prov.* 25. 21. if thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst, give him Drink for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Some will have it a sin-punishing fire; but others an heart-melting fire; to be sure, it will either melt his heart, or aggravate his misery. *Augustin* thinks that *Steven's* prayer for his enemies, was the great means of *Paul's* conversion.

5. Rem. Seriously propound this question to thy own heart, have I got any good by the wrong and injuries received, or have I not? If they have done you no good, turn the revenge upon your selves. O that I should have such a bad heart, that can get no good out of such trouble, O that my Spirit should be so unlike to *Christs*! the patience and meekness of other Christians have turned all the injuries thrown at them into precious stones; the Spirits of others have been raised in blessing
God

Under wrongs and injuries. 125

God when they have been loaded with reproaches by the world, they have bound them as an Ornament to their necks. *Superbus fio* (said Luther) *quod video nomen pessimum mihi crescere.* I could even be proud upon it, that I have a bad name among wicked men: to the same purpose Jerome sweetly, *Gratias ago Deo meo quod dignus sum quem mundus oderit.* I thank my God, that I am worthy to be hated of the World: Thus their hearts were provoked by injuries to magnifie God, and bless him for them: if it work contrary with me I have cause enough to be filled with self-displacencie.

If you have got any good by them, If the reproaches and wrongs you have received, have made you search your hearts the more, watch your wayes the more narrowly; if their wronging you have made you see how you have wronged God, then let me say for them as Paul did for himself, pray forgive them this wrong.

What can you not find an heart to forgive one that hath been instrumental of so much good to you, that's strange! what though they meant it for evil, yet if God have turned it to good; you have no more reason to rage against the instrument

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strument, than he had, who received a
wound from his enemy which only brake
and let out that imposthume, which other-
wise had been his death.

6. Rem. 'Tis of excellent use to keep the
heart from revenge, to look up and eye the
first cause by which all our troubles are or-
dered.

This will calm and meeken our Spi-
rite quickly; never did a wicked tongue
try the patience of a Saint, more than
David: was tryed by that railing Shimei:
yet the Spirit of this good man was not
at all poisoned with revenge, though he
goes a long cursing and casting stones at
him all the way; yea, though Abishai
offered David, if he pleased, the head of
that enemy; but the King said, *what
have I to do with you, ye Sons of Zeruiah?*
*So let him curse, because the Lord hath said
unto him, curse David, who shall then say
wherefore hast thou done so?* It may be God
uses him as his Rod to lash me because I by
my sin made his enemies to blaspheme
him: and shall I be angry with the Rod?
how irrational were that? This also was
it that quieted Job, he doth not rail and
vow revenge upon the *Caldeans and Sabe-
ans*, but eyes God as the orderer of
those troubles, and is quiet. *The Lord hath
taken*

taken away, blessed be his name, Job 1. 21.

Object. But you will say, *To turn aside the right of a man to subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not, Lam. 3. 36.*

Ans. True, but though it fall not under his approving, yet it doth under his permitting will, and there is a great argument for quiet submission in that; nay, he hath not only the permitting, but the ordering of all those troubles: did we see more of an holy God, we should shew less of a corrupt nature in such trials.

7. Rem. Consider how you daily wrong God, and you will not be so easily enflamed with revenge against others that have wronged you.

You are daily grieving and wronging God, and yet he bears, forgives, and will not take vengeance upon you, and will you be so quick in avenging your selves upon others? O what a sharp and terrible rebuke is that, *Mat. 18. 32, 33. O thou wicked, and sloathful servant, I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredst me, shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity upon thee?* None should be filled with bowels of pity, forbearance, and mercy, to such

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as wrong them, as those should be that have experienced the Riches of Mercy themselves: methinks the Mercy of God to us should melt our very Bowels into Mercy over others: 'Tis impossible we can be *cruel* to others, except we forget how kind Christ hath been to us: those that have found Mercy should shew Mercy: if kindness cannot work, methinks fear should. *If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses, Mat. 6. 15.*

8. Rem. *Lastly, let the consideration of the day of the Lord which draweth nigh, withhold your hearts from anticipating it by acts of revenge.*

Why are you so quick? Is not the Lord at hand, to avenge all his abused servants? *Be patient therefore my Brethren unto the coming of the Lord: Behold the Husbandman waiteth. &c. Be ye also patient, for the coming of the Lord draws nigh: grudge not one against another, Brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold the Judge standeth at the door, Jam. 5. 7. 8. 9* This Text affords three arguments against revenge (1) The Lords near approach. (2) The example of the Husbandmans patience. (3) The danger we draw upon our selves by anticipating Gods judgment: vengeance is
mine

mine, saith the Lord, he will distribute justice more equally and impartially, than you can: They that believe they have a God to right them, will not so much wrong themselves, as to avenge their own wrongs.

1. *Obj. But flesh and blood is not able to bear such abuses.*

Sol. If you resolve to consult flesh and blood in such cases, and do no more but what that will enable you to do; never pretend to Religion. Christians must do singular and supernatural things.

2. *Obj. But if I pack up such abuses, I shall be reckoned a fool, and every one will trample upon me.*

Sol. 1. You may be reckoned so among fools, but God and good men will account it your wisdom, and the excellency of your Spirits.

2. It must be a base spirit indeed, that will trample upon a meek and forgiving Christian. And thus learn to keep your hearts from revenge, under all provocations.

8. *Seaf.* "The next Season in which
"we are in danger of losing our hearts,
"is, when we meet with great crosses
"and provocations: Then sinful passion
"is apt to transport the heart, 'tis the
K "fault

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“ fault of many good men, to be of hasty
 “ and quick Spirits, when provoked;
 “ though they dare not concoct anger
 “ into malice, for that would be a note
 “ of wickedness; yet are they very incident
 “ to sudden anger, which is a
Beza in Vit. “ sign of weakness. *Beza* in
Cal. p. 109. “ the life of *Calvin* observes,
 “ That he was of a keen and
 “ hasty Spirit: And he that
 “ writes the life of Great
Iron Came- “ *Cameron*, saith, That his
ronis. “ anger was soon stirred to-
 “ wards his near and familiar friends, but
 “ then he would easily oppose it, and ac-
 “ knowledge his weakness: Alas, when
 “ provocations and tryals of our patience
 “ come, we know not what spirits we are
 “ of. The eighth case therefore is this.

8 Case. *How the heart may be kept
 meek and patient under great crosses and pro-
 vocations?*

There are three sorts of anger, natural,
 holy, and sinful anger. (1) Natural, which
 is nothing else but the motion of the iras-
 cible appetite towards an offensive ob-
 ject; and this in it self is no sin, they are
 propassions rather than passions; the in-
 felicities, rather than the sins of nature,
 as *Jerome* calls them: Reason (saith *Plu-
 tarch*)

rarch) is the Driver, the Soul is the Chariot, and the two Horses that draw it on in all its motions, are the concupiscible and irascible appetites; whilst these are rightly managed by Reason, they are not only lawful, but very useful to the Soul. God would not have us to be stupid and insensate, though he would have us to be meek and patient. In *Ephes. 4. 26.* he allows the natural motion, but forbids the sinful exorbitancy. (2.) Holy anger which is a pure flame, kindled by an Heavenly spark of love to God, and in Scripture is called *zeal*, which is (as one saith) the Dagger which Love draws in Gods quarrel. Such was *Lots* against the *Sodomites*, and that of *Moses* against the Idolatrous *Israelites*. When *Servetus* condemned *Zwinglius* for his rashness, his answer was, *In aliis mansuetus ero, in blasphemis in Christum, non ita*; in other cases I will be mild, but in the cause of Christ not so. That which the World calls Moderation and Mildness here, is in Gods account stupidity and cowardliness, neither of these are that which I am now perswading you to keep your hearts against. But (3) there is sinful passion; that is the thing which endangers you. Now anger becomes sinful when

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'tis either *Causeless*, Matth. 5. 22. or *ex-*
cessive, and that either in measure or
time, exceeding the value of the impul-
sive cause, be it more transient or abiding,
yet it is a sin, and is matter of humiliation
before God. Now the means to keep the
heart from it under provocations are
these.

1. Means. *Get low and humble thoughts*
of your selves, and then you will have meek
spirits, and peaceable deportments towards
others.

The humble is ever the patient man,
pride is the root of passion, a losly, will be
a surly spirit: Bladders blown up with
wind, will not lie close together: But
prick them, and you may pack a thou-
sand in a small room, *only by pride cometh*
contention, Prov. 13. 10. When we
over-rate our selves, then we think we
are unworthily treated by others, and
that provokes; and here (by the way)
take notice of one great benefit of ac-
quaintance with your own hearts, even
the meekning and calming of our Spirits.
Christian, methinks thou shouldst know
so much by thy self, that 'tis impossible
any should lay thee lower, or have baser
thoughts of thee than thou hast of thy
self. Some render the original of that
Text,

under provocations to anger. 133

Text, Hab. 2. 5. Thus the proud man is as he that transgresseth by wine, and drunkards you know are quarrellsome: O get more humility, and that will bring you more peace.

2^d Means. Be often sweetening your spirit, in communion with God, and they will not easily be embittered with wrath towards men.

A quiet Conscience never produced an unquiet conversation: The peace of God doth *Beeswax* rule in the heart, as an Umpire in appeasing strifes, for so much that word, Col. 3. 15. imports; wrath and strife are hugely opposite to the frame and temper of a spiritual heart, because inconsistent with the delight and contentment of that Dove-like Spirit, which loves a sedate and quiet Brest. O saith a Soul that feeds upon the sweet Communion of the Spirit, shall the sparkles of provocations now catch in my passions, and raise such a smoke in my Soul as will offend and drive away the Comforter from me? This is so effectual a remedy against passion, that I durst almost venture in a Christian of an hasty nature to make long suffering a sign of Communion with God. Seest thou such a Christian quiet and calm under pro-

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provocations, 'tis very like his Soul feeds upon such sweetness in God as he is loath to leave; and on the other side, seest thou a Christian turbulent and clamorous, doubtless all is not well within: His Spirit is like a Bone out of joynt, which cannot move without pain and trouble.

3. *Mea. Get due apprehensions of the evil nature and effects of sinful anger. Ira, furor brevis, anger is a short madness (saith one.) Ira anima febris (saith another.)* Anger is the Feaver of the Soul. 'Tis the *interregnum* and eclipse of Reason, saith a third.

The effects of it also are very sad. (1) *It grieves the Spirit of God*, Eph. 4. 30. Banishes him from that brest in which it rages and tumultuates. God is the God of Peace; the presence and comforts of God are only enjoyed in a calm: 'Tis a golden note one gives upon the forecited Text. God doth not usually bless with Peace of Conscience, such as make no Conscience of Peace. (2) It gives advantages to the Devil, Eph. 4. 26, 27. Satan is an angry and discontented Spirit, and finds no rest, but in restless hearts: He lives like the *Salamander* in Fires of Contention, he bestirs himself when the Spirits are in a commotion, sometimes he fills

fills the heart with revengeful thoughts, sometimes he fills the lips, and inflames the tongue with undecent language; even a meek *Moses* sometimes spake unadvisedly with his lips. (3.) It dis-tunes the Spirit for duty, upon this account the Apostle dissuades Husbands and Wives from jarring carriages and contentions, that their Prayers be not hindred, 1 *Pet.* 3. 7. All acts of worship must be suitable to the object of worship, but God is the God of Peace, the God of Love. (4.) To mention no more, it disparages the Christian Religion. How would *Plato* and *Pythagoras* shame us, if they were now living. Christ was as a Lamb for meekness, and doth it become his followers to be like Lions? O keep your hearts, or you will at once lose, not only your own Peace, but the credit of Religion.

4 Mea, Consider how sweet a thing it is to a Christian to conquer his corruptions, and carry away the spoils of them.

He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty, and that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a City, *Prov.* 16. 32. Is there any content in venting a Passion? How much more in mortifying it? When thou comest in a calm mood, or upon a death bed to review thy life, how com-

136. *How to keep the heart patient,*
fortable then will it be to reflect upon the
conquests thou hast got by the fear of God
over the evil propensions of thine own
heart! 'twas a memorable saying of *Val-*
entinian the Emperor, when he came to
die: Among all my Conquests (said he)
there is but one that now comforts me;
and being asked what that was, he an-
swered, I have overcome my worst ene-
my, mine own naughty heart.

5 Means. *Shame your selves by setting
before you, those eminent patterns that have
been most excellent for meekness.*

Above all, compare your spirits with
the Spirit of Christ, *Learn of me* (saith he)
for I am meek and lowly, Matth. 11. 29.
Christ was meek and lowly, but I am
proud and passionate. It was the high
commendation of *Moses*, Numb. 12. 3.
*Now the man Moses was meek above all
the men of the earth; and this was the man
that knew G^d face to face.* 'Tis said of
Calvin and *Ursin*, that they both were of
choleric natures, but yet had so learned
the meekness of Christ, as not to utter
one word under the greatest provocation
unbecoming Religion. When I read the
pretty stories of the very Heathens, that
never had the advantages we have, how
the *Pythagorians*, what ever feuds had
been

been among them in the day, would hush all, by sending to each other this message, *The Sun is almost set*; and that of *Plato* to his Scholar, *I would beat thee, if I were not angry.*

When I read what lenity and tenderness *Lycurgus* shewed to an insolent fellow that had struck out one of his eyes; I am ashamed to see how much Christians are out-shot by Heathens, who by meer moral Arguments and Precepts, had thus meekned their spirits, and conquered their passions. The dim Light of Nature could teach *Seneca* to say, that anger will hurt a man more than the offence; for there is a certain bound in the offence; but I know not how far mine anger will carry me. 'Tis a shame that these men who come so far behind us in means and advantages, should so far out-strip us in meekness and patience.

Means 6. Lastly, *Avoid all irritating occasions.*

He that will not bear the Clapper, must not pull the Rope. Grievous words stir up anger (saith *Solomon*) *Prov. 15. 1.* Do not only pray, and resolve against it; but get as far as you can out of the way of it; 'tis true Spiritual Valour to run as fast, and as far as we can out of
sins

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fin's way: If you can but avoid anger in its first rise, there is no great fear of it afterwards; for it is not with this sin, as it is with other sins; other sins grow to their full strength by degrees, their first motions are the weakest, but this sin is born in its full strength, it is strongest at first, withstand it then, and it falls before you. Thus learn to keep your hearts when provocations arise.

Season 9. The Ninth Season of exerting our greatest diligence, "Is the Critical hour of temptation, wherein Satan lays close siege to the Fort-Royal of a Christians heart, and often surprises it for want of watchfulness: To keep thy heart now, is no less a Mercy than a Duty; few Christians are so well skilled in detecting the fallacies, and refuting the Arguments by which Satan uses to draw them to sin, as to come off safe in those encounters. *Watch and pray* (saith our Lord) *lest ye enter into temptation, Mark 14.38.* Even an eminent *David*, and a wise *Solomon*, have smarted for their carelessness at such a time as this. The ninth Case therefore shall be this.

Case 9. How a Christian, when strongly solicited by the Devil to sin, may keep his heart

to sin, under strong temptations. 139
heart from yeilding to the temptation?

Now there are six special Arguments, by which Satan subtilly insinuates and winds in the temptation; in all which, I shall offer thee some help for the keeping of thy heart, and the first is this.

Argu. 1. The first Argument is drawn from the pleasure of sin: O (saith Satan) here is pleasure to be enjoyed; temptation comes with a smiling countenance, and charming voice: What, art thou so flegmatick and dull a soul, as not to feel the powerful charms of pleasure? Who can withhold himself from such delights?

Now thine heart may be kept from the danger of this temptation, by retorting this Argument of pleasure upon the tempter; which is done two ways.

1. Thou tellest me Satan, that sin is pleasant; be it so: But are the gripes of Conscience, and the flames of Hell so too? Is it pleasant to feel the wounds and throbs of Conscience? If so, Why did *Peter* weep so bitterly, *Matth. 26. 75.* Why did *David* cry out of broken bones, *Psalms 51.* I hear what thou sayest of the pleasure of sin, and I have read what *David* hath said of the terrible effects of sin in his *Psalms*, to bring to remem-

membrance, *Psalm 38. verse 2. Thine Arrows stick fast in me, and thy Hand presseth me sore. Vers. 3. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin. Vers. 4. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head as an heavy burthen; they are too heavy for me. Vers. 5. My wounds stink and are corrupt, because of my foolishness. Vers. 6. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long. Vers. 7. My loyns are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh. Vers. 8. I am feeble, and sore broken, I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.*

Here I see the true face of sin, If I yield to thy temptation, I must either feel these pangs of Conscience, or the flames of Hell.

2. What talkest thou of the pleasure of sin, when by experience I know there is more true pleasure in the mortification, than can be in the commission of sin. O how sweet is it to please God, to obey Conscience, to preserve inward Peace, to be able to say, in this tryal I have discovered the sincerity of my heart; now I know I fear the Lord, now I see that I truly hate sin. Hath sin any such

under strong temptations. 141
such delight as this? This will choak that temptation.

Arg. 2. The second Argument is drawn from the secrecy of sin. O (saith Satan) this sin will never disgrace thee abroad; none shall know it.

This Argument may be retorted, and the heart secured thus. Thou sayest, none shall know it; but Satan, canst thou find a place void of the Divine Presence for me to sin in? Thus *Job* secured his heart from this temptation, *Job* 31. 4. *Doth he not see my ways, and count all my steps?* Therefore he makes a Covenant with his eyes, *vers.* 1. After the same manner *Solomon* teaches us to retort this temptation, *Prov.* 5. 20, 21. *And why, my son, wilt thou be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.* What if I hide it from the eyes of all the world for the present, I cannot hide it from God; and the time is at hand, when all the World shall know it too; for the Word assures me, *Luke* 8. 17. *That what is done now in secret, shall be proclaimed as upon the house top.* Besides, is not my Conscience as a thousand witnesses? Do I ow no reverence to my self? Could the Heathen
man

142 *The heart kept from yeliding*
man say, *Turpe quid ausurus, re sine teste*
time, when thou art tempted to commit
sin, fear thy self without any other wit-
ness; and shall not I be afraid to sin, be-
fore mine own Conscience, which al-
ways hath a reproof in its mouth, or a
pen in its hand, to record my most secret
actions?

Arg. 3. The third Argument by which
Satan tempteth to sin, is taken from the
gain and profit arising out of it: Why so
nice and scrupulous? 'tis but stretch Con-
science a little, and thou maist make thy
self: Now is thy opportunity.

The heart may be kept from falling into
this dangerous snare, by retorting the
temptation thus: But what profit will
it be if a man should gain the whole
World, and lose his own Soul? Or what
shall a man give in exchange for his Soul?
Math. 16. 26. O my Soul, my precious
Soul! Shall I hazard thee for all the good
that is in this World? There is an Im-
mortal Spirit dwelling in this fleshly
Tabernacle of more value than all earthly
things, which must live to all eternity,
when this World shall lie in white Ashes.
A Soul, for which Jesus Christ shed his
precious and invaluable Blood: I was sent
into this World to provide for this Soul;
indeed

to sin; under strong temptations. 143
indeed, God hath also committed to me
the care of my body. but (as one happily
expresses it) with this differ-
ence : A Master commits *Gospel Glass*,
two things to a Servant, the *P. 3.*

Child and the Childs cloaths; will the Ma-
ster thank the Servant, if he plead, I have
kept the cloaths, but I have neglected the
life of the Child.

Arg. 4. The fourth Argument is
drawn from the smalness of the sin. 'Tis
but a little one, a small matter, a trifle;
who should stand upon such niceties?

This Argument may be retorted three
ways.

1. But is the Majesty of Heaven, a lit-
tle one too? If I commit this sin, I must
offend and wrong a great God, *Isa. 40.*
15, 16, 17, 22.

2. Is there any little Hell to torment
little sinners in? Are not the least sinners
there filled with the fulness of wrath? O
there is great wrath treasured up for such
as the world counts little sinners.

3. The less the sin, the less the induce-
ment to commit it. What, shall I break
with God for a trifle? Destroy my peace,
wound my Conscience, grieve the Spirit,
and all this for nothing? Oh, what mad-
ness is this?

Arg.

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Arg. 5. A fifth Argument is drawn from the Grace of God, and hopes of pardon: Come, God will pass by this as an infirmity, he will not be extream to mark it.

But stay my heart,

1. Where do I find a promise of mercy to presumptuous sinners? Indeed, for involuntary surprisals, unavoidable, and lamented infirmities, there is a pardon of course; but where is the promise to a daring sinner, that sins upon a presumption of pardon? Pause a while, my Soul, upon that Scripture, *Numb. 15. 27, 30.*

And if a Soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a She-Goat of the first year for a Sin-offering, &c. But the Soul that doth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord, and that Soul shall be cut off from among his people.

2. If God be a God of so much mercy, How can I abuse so good a God? Shall I take so glorious an attribute as the mercy of God is, and abuse it unto sin? Shall I wrong him, because he is good? Or should not rather the goodness of God lead me to repentance, *Rom. 2. 4.* *There is mercy with thee, that thou maist be feared, Psal 130. 4.*

Arg. 6. Lastly, Sometimes Satan in-

con-

courages to sin from the examples of good and holy men, thus, and thus they have sinned, and been restored, therefore this may consist with grace; and thou be saved nevertheless. The danger of this temptation is avoided, and the heart secured, by retorting the argument these three wayes.

1: Though good men may commit the same sin materially, which I am tempted to, yet did ever any good man venture to sin, upon such a ground and encouragement as this.

2, Did God record these examples for my imitation, or for my warning? are they not set up as Sea-marks, that I might avoid the Rocks upon which they split? 1 Cor. 10.6. *Now these were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.*

3. Am I willing to feel what they felt for sin? O I dare not follow them in the wayes of sin! *quia me vestigia terrent*: Least God plunge me into the deeps of horror, into which he cast them.

Thus learn to keep your hearts in the hour of temptation to sin.

10. *Season.* The tenth special season "to keep the heart with all diligence," in the time of spiritual darkness and
L doubt

146 *Desperate conclusions kept out,*
“doubting when it is with the Soul, as it
“was with *Paul* in his dangerous voy-
“age neither Sun, nor Moon; nor Star
“appeares for many dayes: when by rea-
“son of the hidings of Gods face, the
“prevalency of Corruption, and the in-
“evidence of grace; the soul is even
“ready to give up all its hopes and com-
“forts for lost; to draw sad and despe-
“rate conclusions upon it self; to call
“its former comforts vain delusions:
“its grace Hypocrisie. When the se-
“rene and clear Heavens are overcast
“with dark clouds, yea filled with thun-
“ders, and horrible tempests; when
“the poor pensive Soul sits down and
“weeps for this sad Lamentation, *my*
“*hope is perished from the Lord!* now to
“to keep the heart from sinking in such a
“day as this, to enable it to maintain
“its own sincerity, is a matter of great
“difficulty. The tenth Case then will be
“this.

Case 10. *How the people of God in dark
and doubting seasons, may keep their hearts
from entertaining such sad conclusions about
their estates, as destroy their peace, and un-
fit them for their duty.*

There are two general heads, to which
the grounds of doubting our sincerity
may

may be reduced. (1) Gods carriage towards the Soul, either in the time of some *extraordinary affliction*, or of some long and *sad desertion*. Or, (2) The souls carriage towards God: and here it usually argues against the truth of its own graces, either, (1) From its relapses into the same sins, from which it hath formerly risen, with shame and sorrow. Or, (2) From the sensible declinings of its affections from God. Or, (3) From the excess of the affections towards creature-comforts and enjoyments. Or, (4) From its enlargements in publick, and often straitnings in private duties. Or, (5) From some horrid injections of Satan, with which the soul is greatly perplexed. Or, Lastly, from Gods silence, and seeming denial of its long depending Suits and Prayers.

These are the common grounds of those sad conclusions: Now in order to the establishment and support of the heart in this condition it will be necessary.

1. That you be acquainted with some general Truths, which have attendancy to the settlement of a trembling and doubting Soul.

2. That you be rightly instructed about

148 *Desperate conclusions kept out,*
bout the fore-mentioned Particulars,
which are the grounds of your doubting.

The general truths requisite for poor doubting souls to be acquainted with, are these :

1. *That every working and appearance of hypocrisie doth not presently prove the person in whom it is to be an Hypocrite.* You must carefully distinguish between the *presence* and *predominancy* of hypocrisie : there are remains of deceitfulness in the best hearts: *David* and *Peter* had sad experience of it, yet the standing frame and general bent of the heart being upright : it did not denominate them Hypocrites.

2. *That we ought as well to hear what can be said for us, as against us :* It is the sin of upright hearts sometimes to use an over ridged, and merciless severity against themselves : they do not indifferently consider the case of their own souls : it is in this case as *Solomon* speaks in another, *Prov. 13. 7. There is that maketh himself rich, and yet hath nothing ; and there is that maketh himself poor, and yet hath great riches.* 'Tis the damning sin of the self-flattering Hypocrite, to make his condition better than it is : and it is the sin and folly of some upright ones

ones to make their condition worse than indeed it is. Why should you be such enemies to your own peace? to read over the evidences of Gods love to your souls, as a man doth a Book which he intends to confute? why do you study to find evasions, to turn off these comforts which are due to you? 'Tis said of *Joseph* that he was minded to put away his espoused *Mary*, not knowing that that holy thing which was conceived in her, was by the holy Ghost: and this may be your case. A third truth is this.

3. *That many a Saint hath charged and condemned himself of that, which God will never charge him with, nor condemn him for.* Why hast thou hardned our hearts from thy fear (saith the Church) *Isa. 63. 17.* and yet the verse before manifests, that their hearts were not so hardned: godly *Bradford* wrote himself an hypocrite, a painted sepulchre; yet doubtless God acquitted him of that charge.

4. *Every thing which is a ground of grief to the people of God, is not a sufficient ground of questioning their sincerity.* There are many more things to trouble you than there are to stumble you: if upon every slip and falling through infirmity, you should question all that ever was

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wrought upon you, your life must be
made up of doubtings and fears: you can
never attain a settled peace, nor live that
life of praise and thankfulness, the Go-
spel calls for.

5. *The Soul is not at all times fit to pass
judgment upon its own condition:* To be
sure in the dark day of desertion, when
the Soul is benighted; and in the stormy
day of temptation, when the Soul is in
a hurry; 'tis utterly unfit to judge its
estate: examine your hearts upon your
beds, and be still, *Psal. 4.* This is rather
a season for watching and resisting, than
for judging and determining.

6. *That every breach of peace with God,
is not a breach of Covenant with God:* The
wife hath many weaknesses and failings,
often grieves and displeases her husband;
yet in the main is faithful, and truly loves
him: these failings may cause him to al-
ter his carriage, but not to withdraw his
love, or deny his relation. *Return O back-
sliding Israel for I am married unto you.*

7. *Lastly, what ever our sin, or trouble
be, it should rather drive us to God, than
from God.* Pardon my sin for it is great,
Psal. 25 11. Suppose it be true, that thou
hast so and so sinned, that thou art thus
long and sadly deserted; yet 'tis a false
infe-

inference, that therefore thou shouldest be discouraged, as if there were no help for thee in thy God. When you have well digested these seven establishing truths, if still the doubt remain, then consider, what may be replied to the particular grounds of those doubts. As

1. You doubt and are ready to conclude the Lord hath no regard or love for your souls, because of some extraordinary affliction which is come upon you: but I would not have thy soul so to conclude till you be able satisfactorily to answer these three questions.

1. *Quest.* If great troubles and afflictions be marks of Gods hatred, why should not impunity and constant prosperity be tokens of his love? for *contrariorum contraria est ratio & consequentia*: of contrary things, there is a contrary reason and consequence: but is this so indeed? or saith not the Scripture quite otherwise? *Prov. 1. 32. The prosperity of fools destroy them.* So *Psal. 73. 5.*

2. *Quest.* Dare I draw the same conclusion upon all others that have been as much yea more afflicted than my self? if this argument conclude against thee, then so it doth against every one in thy condition; yea, the greater the affliction

152 *Desperate conclusions kept out,*
of any Child of God hath been, the
more strongly the argument still con-
cludes: and then woe to *David*, *Job*,
Haman, *Paul*, and all as have been af-
flicted as they were.

3. *Quest.* Had God exempted you on-
ly from those troubles, which all other
his people feel, would not that have been
a greater ground of doubting to you than
this? especially since the Scripture saith,
Heb. 12. 8. If ye be without chastnings
whereof all are partakers, then are ye Ba-
stards, and not Sons.

O how is our Father put to it by fro-
ward Children! if he afflicts, then one
cries he loves me not: if he exempt from
affliction, others question his love upon
that ground. Surely you have other work
to do under the rod then this.

2. Or do you rashly infer; the Lord
hath no love for you, because he hides
his face from you, that your condition
is miserable, because dark and uncom-
fortable, before you draw such rash con-
clusions, see what answer you can give
to these 4. following queries.

1. *Quer.* If any action of God towards
his people will bear a favourable, as well as
an harsh and severe construction, why should
not his people interpret it in the best sense?
And

And is not this such? may he not have a design of love as well as of hatred in this dispensation? may he not depart for a season, and not for ever, yea, that he might not depart for ever? you are not the first that have mistaken Gods ends in desertion, *Isa. 49. 14. Sion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me*; was it so indeed? nothing less *ver. 15. can a Mother forget, &c.*

2. *Quer. Do you find the marks of an absolute, total and final desertion upon your own Spirits, that you are so apt to conclude yours to be such?* Do you find your heart inclined to forsake God? Have you lost your conscientious tenderness in point of sin? if so, Sad characters appear unto you indeed: but if in this dark hour, you are as tender of sin as ever, as much resolved to cleave to God as ever; I cannot, I will not forsake God, let him do what he will with me, Oh no, I cannot. If your hearts work thus, it can be but a partial, limited and temporary desertion; by this he still keeps his interest in your hearts, a sure sign he will return and visit you again.

3. *Quer. Is sense and feeling a competent judge of Gods actions and designs.* Or may a man safely rely upon its testimony after

154 *Desperate conclusions kept out,*
after so many discoveries of the infallibility of it? is this a sound argument? if God had any love for my soul, if it were not quite gone, I should feel it now as well as in former times; but I cannot feel it, therefore it's quite gone. Do you not know the Sun still keeps on his course in the Heavens even in full and close weather, when you cannot see it? and may it not be so with the Love of God? Read *Isa. 50. 10.* may I not as well conclude in Winter when the flowers have hid their beautifull heads under ground, they are quite dead and gone, because I cannot find them in *December*, where I saw them in *May*?

4. *Qur.* Thinke you the Lord cares not to break his Childrens hearts, and his own promise too? hath he no more, regard to either? if he return no more, these must be the consequents, *Isa. 57. 16. 17. Heb. 13. 5.*

Well then, from Gods carriage towards you, either in affliction or desertion no such discouraging, heart-sinking conclusions can be infer'd. Next let us see whether they may not be inferr'd from our carriage towards God: and here the principal grounds of doubting are such as these,

1. I have fallen again into the same sin from which I have formerly risen with repentance and resolution, therefore my sinning is customary sinning, a spot that is not the spot of Gods Children; hence the upright soul trembles, upon this 'tis ready to affirm that all its former humiliations for, and oppositions unto sin, were but acts of hypocrisie. But stay poore trembling heart.

1. Quer. *If this be so, how comes it to pass that Christ put such a favourable construction upon the Disciples sleeping the third time, when he had as often reproved them for it? Matth. 26. 40. 41.* And how is it that we find in Scripture so many promises made not only to the first sins, but also to the backslidings of Gods people, *Jer. 3. 22. Hos. 14. 4.*

2. Quer. *Is not your repentance and care renewed, as often as your guilt is renewed? Yea the oftner you sin, the more you are troubled? it is not so in customary sinning, the rise whereof Ber-*

nard excellently discovers *Lib. de Consc.*

(1) (saith he) when a man *p. 1109.*

accustomed to good, sinneth grievously, it seems importable, yea he seems to descend alive into Hell. (2) In process of time it seems not importable,

156 *Desperate conclusions kept out,*
ble, but heavy; and betwixt importable
and heavy there is no small descent.
(3) Next it becomes light, his conscience
smites but faintly, and he feels not the
stripes of it. (4) Then there is not only
a total insensibleness of it, but that which
was bitter and displeasing, is now be-
come sweet and pleasing in some degree.
(5) Then 'tis turned into custom, and
not only pleases, but daily pleases. Last-
ly, custom is turned into nature, he can
not be pull'd away from it; but defends
and pleads for it: this is customary sin-
ning, this is the way of the wicked; but
the quite contrary is our condition.

3. *Quer. Are you sure from Scripture*
grounds that a good man may not relapse
again and again into the same sin? 'Tis
true, as for gross sins, they do not use
to relapse into them. David committed
Adultery no more, Paul persecuted the
Church no more, Peter denyed Christ no
more; but I speak of ordinary infirmi-
ties: Job's friends were good men, yet
(saith he) Chap. 19. 3. *These ten times*
have ye reproached me. So then, no such
conclusions follow from this first ground of
doubting.

2. *The second ground is, the declining*
and withering of our affections to spiritual
things

things. O saith the upright Soul, if ever I had been planted a right seed, I should have been as a green Olive-tree in the house of my God: but my branches wither, therefore my root is naught. But stay.

1. *Quer.* May you not be mistaken about the decay of grace, and fading of your affections? What if they be not so quick and ravishing as at first? may not that be recompensed in the spirituality and solidity of them now? 1. *Phil. 9:* I pray God your love may abound more and more in all judgment; it may be more solid, though not so fervent; or do you not mistake by looking forward to what you would be, rather than backward to what once you were? 'tis a good note of *Ames*; we discern the growth of Grace as the growth of plants, which perceive rather *crevisse quam crescere*, to have grown than to grow.

2. *Quer.* But grant it be so indeed as you affirm, must it needs follow that the root of the matter is not in you? *David's* last ways are distinguished from his first, 2 *Chron. 17. 3.* and yet both first and last, a holy man. The Church of *Ephesus* is charged by Christ for leaving her first love, and yet a golden Candlestick, many

158 *Desperate conclusions kept out,*
many precious Saints in that Church Re-
vel. 2, 2, 3, 4.

3. A third ground of these sad conclusions, is the access of our affections to some creature injoyments. I fear I love the creature more than God, and if so, my love is but hypocritical. I sometimes feel stronger, and more sensible motions of my heart to some earthly comforts, than I do to Heavenly objects: therefore my soul is not upright in me. But stay Soul.

1. (Quer.) *May not a Man love God more solidly and strongly, than the creature, and yet his affections to the Creature be sometimes moved more violently and sensibly than toward God?* as rooted malice argues a stronger hatred, than a sudden, though more violent passion; so we must measure our love, not by a violent motion of it now and then, but by the depth of the root, and constancy of its actings: because David was so passionately moved for Absalom, Joab concludes that if he had lived, and all the people dyed; it would have pleased him well, 2 Sam. 19. 7. but that was argued more like a Soldier than a Logician.

(2. Quer.) *If you indeed love the creature for it self, if you make it your end and religion*

in dark and doubting daies. 159

religion but a meanes, then the conclusion is rightly drawn upon you. But if you love the creature in reference to God, and see nothing in it separated from him, though sometimes your affections offend in the excess, this is consistent with sincere love to God. To love the creature inordinately (i. e.) to put it in Gods room, and make it a mans end; this is the love of a carnal heart, to love it immoderately, that is, to let out more affection to it than we ought, is sometimes the sin of the best hearts.

(3 Quer.) Have not many Souls feared as you do, that when Christ and creature should stand as competitors in some eminent tryal they should forsake Christ rather than the Creature, and yet when brought to that Dilemma have been able to cast all the world at their heels for Christ? Many of the Martyrs had such fears, and thus they were satisfied: the prevalencie of love is best seen at parting: there may be more love to Christ in thy soul than thou art now aware of; and if God bring thee to such a pinch thou mayst see it.

*4. A fourth ground of these sad conclusions is from hence, that we find our hearts sometimes more straitned in private, than in publick duties. Oh if my
Soul*

O *D:perate conclusions kept out.*

Soul were sincere, it is actings in Duty would be uniform. I fear I am but a *Pharisee* upon this ground; 'Tis sad indeed we should at any time find our hearts straitned in private. But,

1. *Quer. Do not all thine enlargements in duty whether publick or private, depend upon the Spirit, who is the Lord of influences, and according as he gives out, or holds back these influences, so art thou enlarged or straitned?* And what if sometimes he please to give that in a publick, which he with-holds in a private duty, as long as thy Soul is satisfied in neither without Communion with God, and the straitness of thy heart is indeed its burden; doth that argue thee to be an Hypocrite.

(2. *Quer.*) *Dost thou not make Conscience of private duties, and set theyself as before the Lord in them?* Indeed, if thou live in the constant neglect, or careless performance of them, if thou art *curious* about publick, and *careless* about private duties, that would be a sad sign; but when you have conscientiously performed and often met with God in them, it will not follow, you are insincere, because that communion is sometimes interrupted. Besides,

(3. *Quer.*)

(3 Quere) *May there not be something at some times in publick, which is wanting in a private duty, to raise and advantage thine affections.* God may sometimes make use of the melting affections of them, with whom thou hearest or prayest, as petty instruments to move thy affections; this advantage is wanting in private; therefore from hence (the case so standing) no such inference can be drawn.

5. Another ground is from those horrid injections of Satan, with which, the Soul is greatly perplexed; by these I may see, what an heart I have: Can grace be where these are?

Yes, grace may be where such thoughts are, though not where they are lodged and consented to: Dost thou cry out under the burden, enter thy protest in Heaven against them; strive to keep up holy and reverend thoughts of God? Then 'tis a *rapt*, not a voluntary *prostitution*.

6. The last ground of these sad conclusions, is the Lords long silence, and seeming denial of our long depending Suits and Prayers. O, if God had any regard to my Soul, he would have heard my cries before now! But I have no answer from him, therefore no interest in him. But stay, doubting Soul.

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(1. *Quere.*) Have not many Saints stumbled upon this stone before thee? *Psa.* 31. 22. I said in my baste, I am cut off from before thine eyes; nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplication. So the Church, *Lam.* 3. 44. Thou coverest thy self with a cloud, that our Prayers should not pass through, *Jonah* 2. 4. Then said I, I am cast out of thy sight, and may not you be mistaken in this matter as well as they?

2. *Quere.* Though Gods abhorring and final rejecting Prayer be an Argument of his abhorring the person that prays, yet dare we conclude so from a meer suspension of the answer? God may bear long with his own elect, that cry unto him day and night, *Luk.* 18. 7.

3. *Quere.* Can you deny but that there are some signs appearing in your Souls, even whilst God suspends his answer that argues your prayers are not rejected by him? As, (1) Though no answer come, yet you are still resolved to wait; you dare not say as that prophane wretch did, *2 Kings* 6. 33. This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait for him any longer. (2) You can clear and justify God still, and lay the reason because of his silence upon your selves. So did David, *Psal.* 22. 2, 3. O

my

my God, I cry in the day time, and thou hearest not; and in the night, and am not silent; but thou art holy, &c. (3) The suspension of Gods answer makes you inquisitive into your own hearts, what evils are there that obstruct your prayers; so the Church, *Law. 3. 8.* He *shuteth out my prayer*; and how doth this work, you may see *Vers. 40.* *Let us search and try our ways.* Well then, neither from hence may you conclude that God hath no love for your Souls.

And thus I have shewn you how to keep your hearts in a dark and doubting season from those desperate conclusions of unbelief. God for- *Caution.* bid any false heart should encourage it self from these things, 'tis our unhappiness, that when we give Saints and sinners their proper portions; that each of them are so prone to take up the others part.

11. *Season.* "The eleventh special season calling for this diligence to keep our hearts is, when sufferings for Religion come to an height; then look to your hearts, *Matth. 24. 8, 9, 10.* *All these are the beginning of sorrows, and they shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all*

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"Nations for my Name sake; and THEN
"shall many be offended. When sufferings
"for Religion grow hot, then blessed is he
"that is not offended in Christ, troubles
"are then at an height. 1. When a mans
"nearest friends and relations forsake and
"leave him, *Mich* 7. 9, 6. *2 Tim* 4. 16.
"When a man is engaged alone. 2. When
"it comes to resisting to blood, *Heb*.
"12. 4. 3. When temptations are pre-
"sented to us in our sufferings, *Heb*. 11.
"37. 4. When eminent persons or pro-
"fession turn aside, and desert the cause
"of Christ, *2 Tim* 2. 19. 5. When God
"hides his face in a suffering hour, *Jer* 17.
"17. 6. When Satan falls upon us with
"strong temptations, to question the
"grounds of our sufferings, or the Souls
"interest in Christ. Now 'tis hard to keep
"the heart from turning back, and the
"steps from declining Gods ways. The
"eleventh question then shall be this

11 Case. *How the heart may be kept
from relapsing under the greatest sufferings
for Religion?* If the bitterness of sufferings
at any time cause thy Soul to distaste the
way of God, and take up thoughts of
forsaking it, stay thine heart under that
temptation by propounding these eight
questions solemnly to it.

1. Quest.

1. *Quest.* *What reproach and dishonor shall I pour upon Christ and Religion, by deserting him at such a time as this? This will proclaim to all the World, that how much soever I have boasted of the Promises, yet when it comes to the tryal, I dare hazard nothing upon the credit of them; and how will this open the mouths of Christs enemies to blaspheme? O better had I never been born, than that worthy Name should be blasphemed through me! Shall I furnish the triumphs of the uncircumcised? Shall I make mirth in Hell? O, if I did but value the Name of Christ, as much as many a wicked man values his own name! I would never endure to see it exposed to such contempt. Will proud Dust and Ashes venture Death, yea, Hell, rather than a blot upon their name? And shall I venture nothing to salve the honor and reputation of Christ?*

2. *Quest.* *Dare I violate my Conscience to save my flesh? Who shall comfort me when Conscience wounds me? What comfort is there in Life, Liberty, or Friends, when Peace is taken away from the inner man? When Constantine threatned to cut off Sam Satenius his right hand, if he would subscribe somewhat that was against*

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his Conscience, he held up both his hands to the Messenger that was sent, saying, He shall cut off both, rather than I will do it. Farewel all Peace, Joy, and Comfort, from that day forward; had Zimri peace that slew his Master? said Jezabel. So say I here, Had Judas peace? Had Spira peace? And shall you have peace, if you tread in their steps? O consider what you do!

3. Quest. Is not the publick interest of Christ and Religion, infinitely more than any private interest of my own? 'Tis a famous passage that of Terentius, Captain to Adrian the Emperor, he presented a Petition to Adrian, that the Christians might have a Temple by themselves to worship God, apart from the Arrians; the Emperor tore his Petition, and threw it away, bidding him to ask somewhat for himself, and it should be granted: But he modestly gathered up the pieces of his Petition again, and told him, *If he could not be heard in Gods cause, he would never ask any thing for himself.* Yea, even Tully, though an Heathen could say, *Ne immortalitatem quidem contra rem publicam*; He would not accept even of Immortality itself against the Commonwealth. O, if we had more publick, we should not have

have such cowardly spirits.

4. Qu. *Did Jesus Christ serve me so, when for my sake he exposes himself to far greater sufferings than can be before me.* His sufferings were great indeed, he suffered from all hands, in all his Offices, in every Member, not only in his Body, but in his Soul; yea, the sufferings of his Soul, were the very Soul of his sufferings; witness the Bloody Sweat in the Garden, witness the Heart-melting, and Heaven-rending out cry upon the Cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And yet he flinched not, *He endured the Cross, despising the shame.* Alas! What are my sufferings compared with Christs? He hath drunk up all that Vinegar and Gall that would make my sufferings bitter. When one of the Martyrs was asked, why he was so merry at his death? Oh said he! It is because the Soul of Christ was so heavy at his death. Did Christ bear such a burden for me, with unbroken patience and constancy? And shall I shrink back for momentary and light afflictions for him?

Quest. *Is not eternal life worth the suffering of a moments pain? If I suffer with him, I shall reign with him. O how will man venture life and limb for a fading*

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Crown, swim through Seas of Blood to a Throne? And will I venture nothing? Suffer nothing for the Crown of Glory that fadeth not away? My Dog will follow my Horses heels, from morning to night, take many a weary step through mire and dirt, rather than leave me, though at night all he gets by it, is but bones and blows. If my Soul had any true greatness, any sparks of generosity in it, how would it despise the sufferings of the way, for the glory of the End! How would it break down all difficulties before it, whilst by an Eye of Faith, it sees the forerunner who is already entred, standing, as it were, upon the Walls of Heaven, with the Crown in his hand, saying, He that overcometh, shall inherit all things. Come on then, my Soul, come on, there is eternal life laid up for them that by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honor, and immortality, *Rom. 2. 7.*

6. *Quest.* Can I so easily cast off the Society and Company of the Saints, and give the right hand of fellowship to the wicked? How can I part with such lovely companions as these have been? How often have I been benefitted by their counsel? *Ezra 10. 3.* How often refreshed, warmed, and

and quickned by their company? *Eccles.* 4. 10, 11. How often have I fasted and prayed with them? What sweet counsel have I taken with them, and gone to the House of God in company? And shall I now shake hands with them, and say, Farewel all ye Saints for ever, I shall never be among you more; come drunkards, swearers, blasphemers, persecutors, you shall be my everlasting companions? O rather let my body and soul be rent asunder, than that ever I should say thus to the excellent of the Earth, in whom is all my delight.

7. *Quest.* Have I seriously considered the terrible Scripture Comminations against backsliders? O my heart! darest thou turn back upon the very points of such threatnings as these? *Jer.* 5. 6. Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord; for he shall be like the Heathen in the Desert; and shall not see when good cometh; i. e. the curse of God shall wither him root and branch. And *Heb.* 14. 26, 27. If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgement, and fiery indignation, which shall de-

vour

your the adversaries: And again, Verse 38. If any man draw back, my Soul shall have no pleasure in him. As if he should say, Take him World, take him Devil for your own; I have no delight in him. O, who dare draw back, when God hath hedged up the way with such terrible threats as these!

8. Quest. Can I look Christ in the face at the day of judgment; if I desert him now?

He that is ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation; of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy Angels, Mark 8. 38. Yet a little while, and you shall see the sign of the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven with Power and great Glory; the last Trump shall sound, the dead, both small and great, even all that sleep in the dust shall awake, and come before that great white Throne, on which Christ shall sit in that day. And now do but imagine thou sawest the trembling knees, and quivering lips of guilty sinners; imagine thou heardest the dreadful sentence of the Judge upon them, Go ye cursed, &c. and then a cry, the weeping, wailing, and wringing of hands, that there shall be.

be. Wouldst thou desert Christ now to protract a poor miserable life on Earth? If the Word of God be true, if the sayings of Christ be sealed and faithful, this shall be the portion of the Apostate: 'Tis an easie thing to stop the mouth of Conscience now, but will it be easie to stop the mouth of the Judge then? Thus keep thy heart, that it depart not from the living God.

Seas 12. The twelfth Season of looking diligently to our hearts, and keeping them with greatest care, is the time of sickness. When a Child of God draws nigh to eternity; when there are but a few Sands more in the upper part of his Glas to run down. Now Satan busily bestirs himself; of him it may be said, as of the Natural Serpent, *Nunquam nisi moriens producit in longum*; he is never seen at his full length till dying; and now his great design, since he cannot win the Soul from God, is to discourage, and make it unwilling to go to God; though the gracious Soul with Jacob, should then rouse up it self upon a dying Bed, and rejoyce, that the marriage day of the Lamb is now almost come, though it should then say with dying Augustine, *Vivere renuo ut Christo*

“*Christo viam*, I despise life to be with
 “Christ; or as dying *Milius*, when one
 “asked him, whether he were willing to
 “die? O said he! *Illius est volle mori*
 “*qui nolit ire ad Christum*. Let him be un-
 “willing to die, who is unwilling to go to
 “Christ. But O! what shrinking from
 “death? what loathness to depart, may
 “sometimes (indeed too frequently) be
 “observed in the People of God? How
 “loath are some of them to take Death
 “by the cold hand? If such a liberty were
 “indulged to us, not to be dissolved till
 “we dissolve our selves; when should
 “we say with *S. Paul*, *I desire to be dis-*
 “*solved*? Well then, the last Case shall be
 this.

Case 12. *How the People of God in times*
of sickness, may get their hearts loose from
all earthly engagements, and perswade them
into a willingness to die.

And there are seven Arguments which
 I shall urge upon the People of God at
 such a time as this, to make them cheer-
 fully entertain the Messengers of Death,
 and die as well as live like Saints; and
 the first is this.

1. Argu. *First the harmlessness of death*
to the People of God. Though it keeps its
 dart, it hath lost its sting: A Saint (to
 allude

allude to that, *Isa. 11. 8.*) May play upon the hole of this Aspe, and put his hand into the Cockatrices Den. Death is the Cockatrice or Aspe; the Grave is his hole or Den. A Saint need not fear to put his hand boldly into it; it hath left and lost its sting in the sides of Christ, *1 Cor. 15. 55.* O Death! where is thy sting, why art thou affraid? O Saint! that this sickness may be thy death, as long as thou knowest that the death of Christ, is the death of death; indeed, if thou didst die in thy sins, as *Job. 8. 21.* If death as a King did reign over thee. *Rom. 5. 14.* If it could feed upon thee as the Lion doth upon the prey he hath taken, as *Psal. 49. 14.* If Hell followed the pale horse as it is, *Revel. 6. 8.* Then thou mightest well startle and shrink back from it; but when God hath put away thy sins from thee, *As far as the East is from the West, Psal. 103. 12.* As long as there is no other evil left in death, or thee to encounter with, but bodily pain: As long as the Scriptures represent it to thee under such harmless and easie notions, as the putting off thy cloaths, *2 Cor. 5. 2.* And lying down to sleep upon thy bed, *Isa. 57. 2.* Why shouldst thou be affraid? there is as much difference betwixt death to the People of God,

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God, and others, as betwixt the *Unicorn's*
Horn, when it is upon the head of that
fierce beast, and when it is in the *Apothe-*
caries Shop, where it is made salubrious
and medicinal.

Argu. 2. *Thy heart may be kept from*
shrinking back at such a time as this, by
considering the necessity of death, in order to
the full fruition of God.

Whether thou art willing to die or no,
I assure thee there is no other way to
obtain the full satisfaction of thy Soul,
and com. leat its happiness, till the hand
of death do thee the kind office to
draw aside the Curtain of Flesh, thy
Soul cannot see God: This *Animal* Life
stands betwixt him and thee, 2 *Cor.* 5. 6.
Whilst we are at home in the Body, we are
absent from the Lord. Thy body must be
refined and cast into a new mould, else
that new wine of Heavenly Glory would
break it. *Paul* in his highest rapture, 2 *Cor.*
12. 4. when he heard things unutterable,
was then but as a stander by, a looker on,
not admitted into the company, as one
of them; but as the Angels are in our
Assemblies, so was *Paul* in that glorious
Assembly above, and no otherwise; and
yet even for this, he must, as it were, be
taken out of the body, unclothed for a
little

little time, to have a glimpse of that glory, and then put on his cloaths again. O then! Who would not be willing to die for a full sight and enjoyment of God? Methinks thy Soul should look and sigh like a Prisoner through the Grates of this Mortality; *O that I had wings like a Dove, then would I flie away, and be at rest.* Most men need patience to die, but a Saint that understands what death admits him to, should rather need patience to live, methinks he should often look out and listen on a death bed for his Lords coming; and when he receives the new of his approaching change, should say, *The voice of my Beloved, Behold he cometh leaping over the Mountains, skipping over the Hills, Cant. 2. 8.*

Argu. 3 *Another Argument perswading to this willingness, is the immediate succession of a more excellent and glorious life.*

'Tis but wink, and you shall see God: your happiness shall not be deferred till the Resurrection; but as soon as the body is dead, the gracious soul is swallowed up in life, *Rom. 8. 10, 11.* When once you have loosed from this shore, in a few moments, your Souls will be wafted over upon the Wings of Angels to the other shore

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shore of a glorious eternity. *Phil. 1. 23.*

I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.

Did the Soul and Body die together, as *Berillus* taught? or did they sleep till the Resurrection, as others have groundlessly fancied? It had been a madness for *Paul* to desire a dissolution for the enjoyment of Christ. For if this were so, he enjoyed more of Christ whilst his Soul dwelt in its fleshly Tabernacle, than he should out of it.

There are but two ways of the Souls living, known in Scripture, viz. The life of *Faith*, and the life of *Vision*, *1 Cor. 3. 3.* Those two divide all time, both present and future, betwixt them, *1 Cor. 13. 12.* If when Faith fails, Sight should not immediately succeed, what should become of the unbodied Soul? But blessed be God, this great heart-establishing truth, is evidently revealed in Scripture, *Luke 23. 43.* You have Christs promise, *John 14. 3.* *I will come and receive you to my self.* O what a change will a few moments make upon your condition! Rouse up dying Saint, when thy Soul is come out a little farther; when it shall stand like *Abraham* in its Tent door, the Angels of God shall soon be with it: The Souls of the elect are as it were put out to the Angels

gels to nurse, and when they dye, these Angels carry them home again to their Fathers house: If an Angel were caused to fly swiftly to bring a Saint the answer of his prayer, *Dan. 9. 21.* How much more will the Angels come post from Heaven to receive and transfer the praying Soul it self?

4. Arg. Farther, *It may much conduce to thy willingness to dye, to consider; that by death God oftentimes hides his people out of the way of all temptations and troubles upon earth, Rev. 14. 13. Write, from henceforth blessed are the dead that dye in the Lord.* 'Tis Gods usual way, when some extraordinary calamities are coming upon the World, to set his people out of harms way beforehand, *Isa. 57. 1. Merciful men are taken away from the evil to come. So Mich. 7. 1, 2.* When such an evil time comes as is there described: *That they all lie in wait for blood, and every man hunts his brother with a net;* before that, God by an act of favour houses his people beforehand, dost thou know what evil may be in the earth, which thou art so loath to leave? thy God removes thee for thy great advantage, thou art disbanded by death, and called off the field; other poor Saints must stand to it, and endure a great fight of afflictions.

N

'Tis

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'Tis observed that *Methusala* dyed the very year before the flood, *Augustin* a little before the sacking of *Hippo*; *Pareus* just before the taking of *Heidelberg*: *Luther* observes that all the Apostles dyed before the destruction of *Jerusalem*: and *Luther* himself before the wars brake out in *Germany*: it may be the Lord sees thy tender heart cannot endure to see the misery, or bear the temptations that are coming; and therefore will now gather thee to thy grave in peace, and yet wilt thou cry, O spare me a little longer?

5. Arg. *If yet thy heart hang back consider the great advantage you will have by death, above all that ever you enjoyed on earth.* And that (1) as to your communion with God. (2) As to your communion with Saints,

1. For your communion with God, the time of perfecting that is now come: thy Soul shall shortly stand before the face of God, and have the immediate emanations and beamings forth of his glory upon it; here thy Soul is remote from God, the beams of his glory strike it but obliquely and feebly, but shortly it will be under the line; and there the Sun shall stand still as it did in *Gibeon*, there shall be no cloudings, nor declining

ings of it. O how should this wrap thy Soul with desires of being unclothed.

2. As for the enjoyments of Saints, here indeed we have fellowship with them of the lower form; but that fellowship is so dissweetned by remaining corruptions, that there is no satisfaction in it; as it is the greatest plague that can befall an Hypocrite to live in a pure Church, so 'tis the greatest vexation to the Spirit of a Saint to live in a corrupt and disordered Church: But when death hath admitted you into that glorious assembly of the Spirits of just men made perfect, you shall have the desire of your hearts; here you cannot fully close one with another, yea, you cannot fully close with your own souls; O what discords, jarrings, censurings, are here? what perfect blessed harmony there? in Heaven each Saint loves another as himself, they are altogether lovely, O my Soul hast thee away from the Lyons dens, from the Mountains of Bether; from divided Saints, to those Mountains of Myrrhe, and hill of Frankincense; thou art now going to thine own people, as the Apostles phrase imports, 2 Cor. 5. 8.

6. Arg. If all this will not do, Con- sider

sider what heavy burdens death will ease thy shoulders of.

In this Tabernacle we groan, being burdened. (1) With bodily distempers, how true do we find that of *Theophrastus*, the Soul pays a dear rent for the tenement it now lives in; but glorified bodies are clogged with no dispositions, death is the best *Physitian*, it will cure thee of all diseases at once. (2) With the indwelling of sin, this makes us groan from the very bowels, *Rom. 7. 24. But he that is dead is free from sin, Rom. 6. 7.* Hath justification destroyed its *damning power*, and sanctification its *Reigning power*? so glorification destroys its very being and existence. (3) We groan under temptations here, but as soon as we are out of the body, we are out of the reach of temptation; when once thou art got into Heaven, thou maist say, now *Satan* I am there where thou canst not come; for as the damned in Hell are *malo obformati*; so fixed in sin and misery that their condition cannot be altered, so glorified Saints are *bono confirmati*, so fixed in holiness and glory that they cannot be shaken. (4) Here we groan under various troubles and afflictions, but then the days of our mourning are ended.

God

God shall wipe away all teares from our eyes: O then! let us hast away that we may be at rest.

7. *Arg.* If still thou linger like Lot in Sodom, then Lastly examine all the pleas and pretences for a longer time on earth. Why art thou unwilling to dye?

1. *Object.* O I have many relations in the World, I know not what will be come of them when I am gone.

Sol. 1. If thou art troubled about their bodies and outward condition, why should not that word satisfie thee, *Jer.* 29. 11. *Leave thy fatherless children to me, I will keep them alive, and let thy Widows trust in me.* Luther in his last Will and Testament hath this expression, Lord, thou hast given me Wife and Children, I have nothing to leave them, but I commit them unto thee. O Father of the Fatherless and judge of Widows, *nutri, serva, doce,* nourish, keep and teach them: or art thou troubled for their souls? Thou canst not convert them if thou shouldst live, and God can make thy prayers and counsels to live and take place upon them when thou art dead.

2. *Object.* I would fain live to do God more service in the World.

Sol. Well, but if he have no more
N 3 service

vice for thee to do here, why shouldst thou not say with *David*: if he have no delight to use me any farther, here am I let him do what seemeth him good: in this World thou hast no more to do, but he is calling thee to an higher service and imployment in Heaven; and what thou wouldst do for him here, he can do that by other hands.

3. *Obj.* I am not yet fully ready, I am not as a Bride compleatly adorned for the Bridegroom.

Sol. 1. Thy justification is compleat already, though thy sanctification be not so; and the way to make it so is to dye, for till then, it will have its defects and wants.

4. *Obj.* O but I want assurance, if I had that, I could dye presently!

Sol. 1. Yea, there it sticks indeed; but then consider, that an hearty willingness to leave all the world to be freed from sin, and be with God, is the next way to that desired assurance: no carnal person was ever willing to die upon this ground.

And thus I have finished those cases which so neerly concern the people of God, in the severall conditions of their life, and taught them how to keep their hearts in all. I shall next apply the whole.

I. Uſe of information.

YOU have heard that the keeping of the heart is the great work of a Chriſtian in which the very ſoul and life of Religion conſiſts, and without which all other duties are of no value with God: hence then I ſhall infer to the conſternation of hypocrites, and formal Profeſſors.

1. That the pains and labours which many perſons have taken in religion, is but loſt labour, and pains to no purpoſe, ſuch as will never turn to account.

Many great ſervices have been performed, many glorious works are wrought by men, which yet are utterly rejected by God and ſhall never ſtand upon record in order to an eternal acception, becauſe they took no heed to keep their hearts with God in thoſe duties: this is that fatal rock upon which thouſands of vain profeſſors ſplit themſelves eternally, they are curious about the externals of Religion, but regardless of their hearts. O how many hours have ſome Profeſſors ſpent in hearing, prayer, reading, conſerring? and yet as to the main end

of Religion, as good they had sate still and done nothing, for all this signifies nothing; the great work, I mean heart work, being all the while neglected: tell me thou vain Professor, when didst thou shed a tear for the deadness, hardness, unbelief, or earthliness of thy heart? thinkest thou, such an easie religion can save thee? if so, we may invert Christs words, and say, wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to life; and many there be that go in-thereat: hear me thou self-deluding hypocrite, thou that hast put off God with heartless duties, thou that hast acted in religion as if thou hadst been blessing an Idol, that could not search and discover thy heart: thou that hast offered to God but the skin of the sacrifice, not the marrow, fat, and inwards of it; how wilt thou abide the coming of the Lord? how wilt thou hold up thy head before him when he shall say, O thou dissembling false-hearted man? how couldst thou profess Religion? with what face couldst thou so often tell me, thou lovest me, when thou knewest all the while in thine own conscience, that thine heart was not with me? O tremble to think, what a fearful judgement it is to be given over to be a heedless
and

and careless heart: and then to have religious duties instead of a rattle to quiet and still the Conscience!

2. Hence I also infer for the *humiliation* even of upright hearts, *that unless the people of God spend more time and pains about their hearts than generally and ordinarily they do, they are never like to do God much service, or be owners of much comfort in this World.*

I may say of that Christian that is remiss and careless in keeping his heart, as *Jacob* said of *Reuben*, *Thou shalt not excel*; It grieves me to see how many Christians there are that go up and down dejected and complaining that live at a poor low rate; both of service and comfort, and how can they expect it should be otherwise as long as they live at such a careless rate? O how little of their time is spent in the closet, in searching, humbling and quickning their hearts?

You say, your hearts are dead; and do you wonder they are so as long as you keep them not with the Fountain of life? if your bodies had been dieted as your Souls have been, they would have been dead too; never expect better hearts till you take more pains with them; *quis fugit molam, fugit farinam*:
he

he that will not have the *sweat*, must not expect the *sweet* of Religion.

O Christians! I fear your zeal and strength hath run in the wrong channel: I fear most of us may take up the Churches complaint, *Cant. 1. 6. They have made me the Keeper of Vineyards, but mine own Vineyards have I not kept.* Two things have eaten up the time and strength of the professors of this Generation, and sadly diverted them from heart work. (1.) Fruitless controversies started by Sathan, I doubt not to this very purpose, to take us off from practical godliness, to make us puzzle our *heads*, when we should be searching our *hearts*. O how little have we minded that of the Apostle, *Heb. 13. 9. 'Tis a good thing that the heart be established with grace, and not with meats, (i. e.) with disputes and controversies about meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein,*

O how much better is it to see men *live exactly*, than to hear them *dispute subtilly*; these unfruitfull questions, how have they rendred the Churches? wasted time and spirits, and called Christians off from their main business, from looking to their own *Vineyard*? what think you *Sirs*? had it not been better if the questions

stions ventiled among the people of God of late daies, had been such as these? how shall a man discern the special, from the common operations of the Spirit? how may a Soul discern its first declining from God? how may a backsliding Christian recover his first love? how may the heart be preserved from unseasonable thoughts in duty? how may a bosom sin be discovered and mortified, &c. would not this have tended more to the credit of Religion, and comfort of your Souls? O 'tis time to repent, and be ashamed of this folly! when I read what *Snarez* a *Papist* said, who wrote many Tomes of disputations, that he prized the time he set apart for the searching and examining of his heart, in reference to God, above all the time that ever he spent in other studies: I am ashamed to find the professors of this age yet insensible of their folly: shall the Conscience of a *Snarez* feel a relenting pang for strength and time so ill employed? and shall not yours? this is it your Ministers long since warned you of: your spiritual Nurses were afraid of the rickets when they saw your heads only to grow, and your hearts to wither. O when will God beat our Swords into plow-

plowshares! I mean our disputes and contentions, into practical godliness.

(2) Another cause of neglecting our heart hath been earthly incumbrances: the heads and hearts of many have been filled with such a crowd and noise of wordly business, that they have sadly and sensibly declined and withered in their zeal, love and delight in God, in their heavenly, serious, and profitable way of conversing with man.

O how hath this wilderness intangled us! our discourses and conferences, nay our very prayers and duties have a tang of it; we have had so much work without doors, that we have been able to do but little wirhin. It was the sad com-

plaint of an holy one, O

Mr. *Strong*. faith he! 'tis sad to think;

how many precious opportunities I have lost? how many sweet motions, and admonitions of the Spirit I have posted over unfruitfully, and made the Lord to speak in vain, in the secret illapses of his Spirit? the Lord hath called upon me, but my wordly thoughts did still lodge in me, and there was no place within my heart for such calls of God! surely there is a way of injoying God, even our wordly imployments;
God

God would never have put us upon them to our loss. *Enoch* walked with God, and begat Sons and Daughters, *Gen.* 5. 19. He walked with God, but did not retire and separate himself from the things of this life: and the *Angels* that are imployed by Christ in the things of this World (for the Spirit of the living creatures is in the wheels) they are finite creatures, and cannot be in a two-fold *ubi* at one time, yet they lose nothing of the beatifical vision, all the time of their administration, for *Mat.* 18. *To their Angels* (even whilst they were imployed for them) *Behold the face of their father which is in Heaven.* We need not lose our visions by our imployments, if the fault were not our own, alas! that ever Christians who stand at the door of eternity, and have more work upon their hands then this poor moment of interposing time is sufficient for, should yet be filling both our heads and hearts with trifles.

3. Hence also I infer for the *awakening* of all, that if the keeping of the heart be the great work of a Christian, then there are but few real Christians in the world.

Indeed, if every one that hath learned the dialect of Christianity, and can talk like

like a Saint, if every one that hath gifts and parts, and by the common assisting presence of the Spirit can preach, pray, or discourse like a Christian; in a word, if such as associate themselves with the people of God, and delight in ordinances, might pass for Christians, the number then is great.

But alas! to what a small number will they shrink, if you judge them by this rule! how few are there, that make Conscience of keeping their hearts, watching their thoughts, judging their ends &c. O there be but few closet men among professors! 'tis far easier for men to be reconciled to any duties in religion than to these: the prophane part of the world will not so much as touch with the out-side of Religious Duties, much less to this: and for the hypocrite though he be polite and curious about those externals, yet you can never perswade him to this inward work, this difficult work: this work to which there is no inducement by humane applause, this work that would quickly discover what the hypocrite cares not to know, so that by a general consent, this heart-work is left to the hands of a few secret ones, and I semble to think in how few hands it is.

H. Use

II. *Use for Exhortation.*

I*F the keeping of the heart be so important a business, if such choice advantages accrue to you thereby; if so many dear and precious interests be wrapt up in it, then let me call upon the people of God every where to fall close to this work.*

O study your hearts, watch your hearts, keep your hearts: away with fruitless controversies and idle questions, away with empty names and vain shews, away with unprofitable discourse and bold censures of others, turn in upon your selves, get into your closets, and now resolve to dwell there: you have been strangers to this work too long, you have kept others vineyards too long, you have trifled about the borders of Religion too long, this World hath detained you from your great work too long; will you now resolve to look better to your hearts? will you halt and come out of the crowds of business and clamours of the world? and retire your selves more then you have done? O that this day you would resolve upon it!

Reader, methinks I should prevail with thee;

192 *A good heart helps a bad head.*

thee; all that I beg for is but this, that thou wouldst step aside a little oftner to talk with God, and thine own heart, that thou wouldst not suffer every trifle to divert thee, that thou wouldst keep a more true and faithfull account of thy thoughts and affections; that thou wouldst but seriously demand of thine own heart, at least every evening, O my heart where hast thou been to day? whether hast thou made a rode to day? if all that hath been said by way of inducement be not enough; I have yet more motives to offer you; and the first is this.

I. Motive. *The studying, observing, and diligent keeping of your own hearts will marvelously help your understanding in the deep mysteries of Religion.*

An honest well experienced heart is a singular help to a weak head, such a heart will serve you instead of a *Commentary* upon a great part of the Scriptures; by this means you shall far better understand the things of God than the learned *Rabbies* and profound *Doctors* (if graceless and unexperienced) ever did, you shall not only have a more clear, but a more sweet perception and gust of them; a man may discourse orthodoxy and pro;

profoundly of the nature and effects of faith, the troubles and comforts of Conscience, the sweetness of Communion with God, but never felt the efficacy and sweet impressions of these things upon his own spirit: but O how dark and dry are these notions, compared with his upon whose heart they have been acted? when such a man reads *Dauids Psalms*, or *Pauls Epistles*, there he finds his own objections made and answered: O faith he, these holy men speak my very heart! their doubts were mine, their troubles mine, and their experiences mine. I remember *Chrisostom* speaking to his people of *Antioch* about some choice experiences used this expression. *Sciunt initiati quid dico*: those that are initiated know what I say, experience is the best Schoolmaster. O then! study your hearts, keep your hearts.

2. *Mot.* *The study and observation of your own hearts will antidote you against the dangerous and infecting errors of the times and places you live in.*

For what think you is the reason that so many professors in *England* have departed from the faith, giving heed to fables: that so many thousands have

O been

been led away by the error of the wicked, that Jesuits and Quakers who have sown corrupt Doctrine, have had such plentiful Harvests amongst them, but because they have met with a company of empty notional Professors, that never knew what belongs to practical godliness; and the study of their own hearts.

If Professors did but give diligence to study, search, and watch their own hearts, they would have that *isior steyuon* that steadfastness of their own that Peter speaks of, 2 Pet. 3. 17. and this would ballast and settle them, Heb. 13. 9. Suppose a subtil Papist should talk to such, of the dignity, and merit of good works, could he ever work the perswasion of it into that heart that is conscious to it self of so much darkness, deadness, distraction, and unbelief attending its best duties? tis a good rule, *non est disputandum de gustu*: there is no disputing against taste; what a man hath felt and tasted, one cannot beat him off from that by argument.

3. Mot. *Your care and diligence in keeping your hearts will prove one of the best evidences of your sincerity.*

I know no external act of religion that differ-

differences the sound from the unsound professor; 'tis wonderful to consider, how far hypocrites go in all external duties, how ~~plausibly~~ they can order the outward man, hiding all their indecencies from the observation of the World.

But then, they take no heed to their hearts, they are not in secret, what they appear to be in publick; and before this tryal no hypocrite can stand; 'tis confess, they may in a fit, under a pang upon a death-bed, cry out of the wickedness of their hearts; but alas! there is no heed to be taken to these extorted complaints; in our law no credit is to be given to the testimony of one upon the rack, because it may be supposed, that the extremity of the Torture may make him say any thing to be eased; but if self-jealousie, care, and watchfulness be the daily workings and frames of thy heart, strongly argues the sincerity of it; for what but the sense of a divine eye, what but the real hatred of sin as sin, could put thee upon those secret duties, which lie out of the observation of all creatures?

If then it be a desirable thing in thine eyes to have a fair testimony of thine integrity, and to know of a truth that

thou fearest God: then study thine heart, watch thy heart, keep thy heart.

4. *Mot. How fruitfull sweet and comfortable would all ordinances and duties be to us if our hearts were better kept?*

O what precious communion might you have with God, every time you approach him; if your hearts were but in frame! you might then say with *David*. *Psalms. 104. 34. My meditation of him shall be sweet.* That which loses all our comforts in ordinances and more secret duties, is the indisposedness of the heart: a Christian whose heart is in a good frame gets the start of others that come with him in that duty: they are tugging hard to get up their hearts with God, now trying this argument upon them, and then that, to quicken and effect them, and sometimes go away as bad as they came. Sometimes the duty is almost ended before their hearts begin to stir to feel any warmth, quickning, or power from it: but all this while the prepared heart is at its work; this is he that ordinarily gets the first sight of Christ in a Sermon: the first seal from Christ in a Sacrament; the first kiss from Christ in secret prayer, I tell you, and I tell you

Heart acquaintance &c. 197

you but what I have felt, that Prayers and Sermons would appear to you other manner of things then they do, did you but bring better ordered hearts unto them, you would not go away dejected and drooping. O this hath been a lost day, a lost duty to me, if you had not lost your hearts it might not be so: if then the comfort of ordinances be sweet, look to your hearts keep your hearts.

5. Mot. *Acquaintance with your own hearts would be a Fountain of matter to you in Prayer.*

A man that is diligent in heart work, and knows the state of his own Soul, will have a fountain-fulness of matter to supply him richly in all his addresses to God; his tongue shall not faulter, and make pauses for want of matter, *Psal.*

45. 1. *My heart is inditing a good matter;* or as *Montanus* renders the original, my heart is boyling up good matter, like a living spring that is still boubling up fresh water; and then my tongue is as the pen of a ready Writer; others must pump their memories, rack their inventions, and are often at a loss when they have done all; but if thou have kept and faithfully studyed thine own heart, it will be

198 *The power of godliness &c.*

with thee (as *Iob* speaks in another case) like bottles full of new Wine, that want vent, which are ready to burst; as holy matter flows plentifully, so more feelingly and sweetly from such a heart; when a heart experienced Christian is mourning before God over some special heart corruption, wrastring with God for the supply of some special inward want, he speaks not as other men do, that have learned to pray by rote, their confessions and petitions are squeezed out, his drop freely like pure honey from the comb, 'tis a happiness then to be with or near such a Christian. I remember *Bernard* having given Rules to prepare the heart for prayer, concluded them thus *Et cum talis fueris memento mei*; and (saith he) when thy heart is in this frame then remember me.

6. Mot. *By this the decayed power of religion will be recovered again among professors, which is the most desirable sight in this World.*

O that I might live to see that day! when professors shall not walk in a vain shew; when they shall please themselves no more with a name to live, being spiritually dead; when they shall be no more

more (as many of them now are) a company of frothy, vain and unserious persons, but the majestick beams of holiness shining from their heavenly, and serious conversation shall awe the World, and command reverence for all that are about them; when they shall warm the hearts of those that come nigh them, so that men shall say, God is in these men of a truth.

Well, such a time may again be expected according to that promise, *Isa. 60. 21. The people shall be all righteous.* But till we fall closer to this great work of keeping our hearts, I am out of hopes to see those blessed days; I cannot expect better times till God give better hearts; doth it not grieve you to see what a scorn religion is made in the World, what objects of contempt and scorn the professors of it are made in the World.

Professors, would you recover your credit? Would you again obtain an honourable testimony in the Consciences of your very enemies, then, keep your hearts, watch your hearts; 'tis the looseness, frothiness, and earthliness of your hearts that hath made your lives so; and

200 *Scandals hereby prevented.*

this hath brought you under contempt of the World, you first lose your sights of God and communion with him, then your heavenly and serious department among men; and by that your interest in their Consciences, O then! for the credit of Religion, for the honour of your profession, keep your hearts.

7. *Mot. By diligence in keeping our hearts, we should prevent and remove the fatal scandals and stumbling blocks out of the way of the World.*

W^ho to the World (saith Christ) because of offences, Matth. 18. 7. doth not shame cover your faces? do not your hearts bleed within you to hear of the scandalous miscarriages of many loose professors? could you not like Shem and Japhet, go backward with a Garment to cover the shame of many Professors? how is that worthy name blasphemed? James 2. 7. 2 Sam. 12. 13, 14. The hearts of the righteous sadned. Psal 25. 3. Ezek, 36. 20. By this the World is fearfully prejudiced against Christ and Religion, the bonds of death made fast upon their Souls: these that had a general love and liking to the ways of God, startled and quite driven back, and thus Soul-
blood

blood is shed : Wee to the World.

Yea, how are the Consciences of fallen professors plunged and even overwhelmed in the deeps of trouble? God inwardly excommunicating their Souls from all comfortable fellowship with himself, and the Joyes of his Salvation; infinite are the mischiefs that come by the scandalous lives of professors.

And what is the true cause and reason of all this; but the neglecting of their hearts? were our hearts better kept, of this would be prevented; had *David* kept his heart, he had not broken his bones; a neglecting careless heart, must of necessity produce a disorderly scandalous life. I thank God for the freedom and faithfulness of a reverend Brother in shewing

*Gospel
glass.*

professors their manifold miscarriages, and from my heart do wish that when their wounds have been thoroughly searched by that *probe*, God would be pleased to heal them by this *Plaster*. O professors! if ever you would keep religion sweet, if ever you hope to recover the credit of it in the World, keep your hearts; either keep your hearts, or lose your credit; keep your hearts, or
lose

lose your comforts; keep your hearts, lest ye shed Soul-blood; what words can express the deep concernments, the wonderfull consequences of this work? every thing puts a necessity, a solemnity a beauty upon it.

8. Mot. *An heart well kept will fit you for any condition. God casts you into, or any service he hath to use you in.*

He that hath learnt how to keep his heart lowly, is fit for prosperity: and he that knows how to use and apply to it Scripture Promises, and supports, is fit to pass through any adversity: he that can deny the pride and selfishness of his heart is fit to be employed in any service for God; such a man was *Paul*, he did not only spend his time in Preaching to others, in keeping others Vineyards, but he look'd to himself, kept his own Vineyard, 1 Cor 9.27. *Lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast away:* and what an eminent instrument was he for God, he could turn his hand to any work, he could dexterously manage both an adverse and prosperous condition: I know how to abound, and how to suffer want; let the people desire him, it moves him not, unless to indignation; Let

Let them stone him, he can bear it; if a man purge himself from these (saith he) (*2 Tim. 2. 21.*) He shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Masters use, and prepared unto every good work.

First the heart must be purged; and then 'tis prepared for any service of God: when the heart of *Isaiah* was purified, which was the thing signified by the touching of his lips with a Coal from the Altar. *Isa. 6. 7.* then he was fit for Gods work; *here am I, send me.* ver. 8. a man that hath not learned to keep his heart, put him upon any service for God, and if it be attended with honour, it shall swell up and overtop his spirit; if with suffering it will exanimate and sink him.

Jesus Christ had an instrumental fitness for his Fathers work above all the servants that ever God imployed, he was zealous in publick work for God, so zealous, that sometimes he forgot to eat bread, yea, that his friends thought he had been besides himself: but yet he so carried on his publick work, as not to forget his own private communion with God; and therefore you read in *Matth. 14. 23.* that when he had been labouring

204 *To its Primitive Beauty.*

ing all day, yet after that he went up to a mountain apart to pray, and was there alone, O let the Keepers of the Vineyards look to their own vineyard! we shall never be so instrumental to the good of others, as when we are most diligent about our own Souls.

9. *Mot. If the people of God would more diligently keep their hearts, how exceedingly would the communion of Saints be thereby sweetned!*

How goodly then would be thy tents O Jacob, and thy tabernacles O Israel! then as it is prophesied of the Jews, *Zech. 8. 23. Men would say, we will go with you; for we have heard that God is among you.* 'Tis the fellowship your souls have with the Father and with the Son, that draws out the desires of others after fellowship with you, 1 *Joh. 1. 3.* I tell you, if Saints would be perswaded to take more pains, and spend more time about their hearts; there would quickly be such a divine lustre upon the face of their conversation that men would account it no small priviledge, to be with or near them.

'Tis the pride, passion, and earthliness of our hearts that hath spoiled Christian fellow-

fellowship; whence is it? that when Christians meet, they are often jarring and contending, but only their unmortified passions; whence are there uncharitable censures of their brethren, but only from self-ignorance? why are they so rigid, and unmerciful towards those that are fallen? but because they consider not themselves, as the Apostle speaks *Gal. 6. 1.* why is there discourse so frothy and unprofitable when they meet? is not this from the earthliness and vanity of their hearts?

My brethren, these be the things that have spoiled Christian fellowship, and made it become a dry and sapless thing; so that many Christians are even weary of it, and are ready to say with the Prophet, *Jer. 9. 2. O that I had a Cottage in the wilderness &c. That I might leave my people and go from them!* and with David, *Psal. 120. 6. My Soul hath long dwelt with them that hate peace:* this hath made them long for the grave, that they might go from them that are not their own people; to them that are their own people, as the original of that Text imports, *2 Cor. 5. 8.*

But now, if professors would study their

205 *The influences of Ordinances,*
their own hearts more, watch and keep
them better, all this would be prevented;
and the beauty and glory of communi-
on again restored; they would divide no
more, contend no more, censure rashly
no more; when their hearts are in tune,
their tongues will not jarr, how chari-
table, pitiful and tender will they be one
of another, when every one is daily
humbled under the evil of his own heart;
Lord hasten those much desired dayes,
and bless these counsels in order to
them.

10. Mot. *Lastly, by this the comforts of
the Spirit, and precious influences of all Ordi-
nances would be fixed, and much longer pre-
served in your souls than now they are.*

Ah! What would I give, that my soul
might be preserved in that frame! I some-
times find it after an Ordinance! *Ali-
quando intromittis me Domine in affectum
multum inusitatum, introrsus ad quam nescio
dulcedinem. &c.* Sometimes O Lord,
(saith one of the Fathers sweetly) thou
admittest me into the most inward, un-
usual and sweet delights, to I know not
what sweetness, which were it perfected
in me, I know not what it would be;
or rather, what it would not be. But
alas!

alas! the heart grows careless again; and quickly returns, like water removed from the fire to its native coldness; could you but keep those things for ever in your hearts, what Christians would you be! what lives would you live! and how is it that these things remain no longer with us? doubtless it is because we suffer our hearts to take cold again; we should be as careful after an Ordinance or duty to prevent this, as one that comes out of an hot bath, or great sweat is, of going out into the chill Air; we have our hot and cold fits by turns, and what is the reason but our unskilfulness and carelessness in keeping the heart.

'Tis a thousand pities, that the Ordinances of God, as to their quickening and comforting effects, should be like those humane Ordinances the Apostle speaks of, that perish in the using. O then, let me say to you, as *Job 15. 11.* *Do the consolations of God seem small to you?* Look over these ten special benefits, weigh them in a just ballance; are they small matters? is it a small matter to have thy weak understanding assisted? thy indangered soul antidoted, thy sincerity cleared, thy communion with
God

God sweetned, thy sails filled in prayer, is it a small thing to have the decayed power of godliness again recovered, all fatall scandal removed, an instrumental fitness to serve Christ obtained, the Communion of Saints restored to its primitive glory, and the influences of ordinances abiding in the Souls of Saints? if these be no common blessings, no small benefits, then surely it is a great duty to keep the heart with all diligence.

The III. Use for Direction.

THe next Use shall be for Direction to some special means for the keeping of the heart; and there besides what hath been hinted in the explication of the duty, page 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. to which I refer the reader and all those directions throughout the whole appropriated to particular cases and seasons, I shall farther add several other general means of excellent use to this end, and the first is this.

I. Means

1. Means. *Would you thus keep your hearts as hath been perswaded, then furnish your hearts richly with the Word of God; which is their best preservative against sin.*

Keep the Word, and the Word will keep you: As the first receiving of the Word regenerated your hearts so the keeping of the Word within you, will preserve your hearts. *Col. 3. 16. Let the Word of Christ dwell richly in you. Let it dwell, not tarry with you for a night, and let it dwell richly, or plentifully; in all that is of it, in its commands, promises, threats; in all that is in you, in your understandings, memories, consciences, affections, and then it will preserve your hearts. Psal 119. 11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee: 'Tis the slipperiness of our hearts in reference to the Word, that causes so many slips in our lives. Conscience cannot be urged, or awed, with forgotten truths: but keep it in the heart, and it will keep both heart and life upright. Psal. 37. 31. The Law of his God is in his heart, none of his steps shall slide; or if he do, the Word will recover the straying heart again. Matth. 26. 57. Then Peter remembered (the words of Jesus) and wept bitterly: We never lose our hearts till*

P

they

they have first lost the efficacious and powerful impressions of the Word.

2. Means. *Call your hearts frequently to an account, if ever you mean to keep them with God.*

Those that put a stock into the hands of unfaithful or suspicious servants, will be sure to make short reckonings with them: *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, Jere. 17. 9.* O 'tis as necessary as sweet, that we and our reins; that is, we and our secret thoughts confer together every night, *Psal. 16. 7.* We should call our hearts to account every Evening, and say, O my heart! where hast thou been to day? where have thy thoughts wandered to day? what account canst thou give of them? O naughty heart, vain heart, couldst thou not abide by the Fountain of Delights? is there better entertainment with the Creature than with God? The oftner the heart meets with rebukes and checks for wandering, the less 'twill wander; if every vain thought were retracted with a sigh, every excursion of the heart from God with a severe check; it would not dare so boldly and frequently to digress and step aside: Those actions which
are

are committed with reluctance are not committed with frequency.

3. Mea. *He that will keep his heart, must take heed of plunging himself into such a multiplicity of earthly business, as he cannot mannage without neglecting his main business.*

It cannot be imagined he should keep his heart with God, that hath lost himself in a wood of earthly business: take heed you do not pinch your souls by gratifying the immoderate desires of your flesh. I wish many Christians could truly say what a *Heathen* once did, *I do not give, but only lend my self to my business.* Tis said *Germanicus* reigned in the *Romans* hearts: *Tyberius* only in their *Provinces*: though the world be in your hands let it not juggle Christ out of your hearts.

Take heed Christian, lest thy *shop* steal away thy heart from thy closet. God never intended earthly imployments for a *shop*, but rather for a *step* to heavenly ones. O let not *Aristippus* the *Heathen* arise in judgment against thee, who said, *he would rather neglect his means than his mind, his farm than his Soul.* If thy ship be over laden thou must cast some overboard:

board: More business than thou canst well manage, is like more meat than thou canst well digest, which will quickly make a sickly soul.

4. Means. He that means to keep his heart, must carefully observe its first declinings from God, and stop it there.

He that will find his house in good repair, must stop every chink as soon as discovered; and he that will keep his heart, must not let a vain thought be long neglected. The Serpent of Heart-Apostasie is best killed in the Egg of a small remission. O, if many poor decayed Christians had looked to their hearts in time, they had never come to that sad pass they now are; we may say of heart-neglects, as the Apostle doth of vain babblings, that they increase to more and more ungodliness, *Nemo repente fit turpissimus*, little sins neglected will quickly become great and masterless. The greatest Crocodile once lay in an Egg, the greatest Oak was once but an Acorn, the firing of a small train of Powder may blow up all by leading to a greater quantity. Men little think what a proud, vain, wanton, or worldly thought may grow to: Behold how great a matter a little fire kindles?

5. Means.

5. Means. Take heed of losing the liveliness and sweetness of your communion with God, least thereby your hearts be loosed off from God.

The heart is an hungry and restless thing, it will have something to feed upon; if it enjoy nothing from God, it will hunt for something among the Creatures, and there it often loses it self, as well as its end. There is nothing more engages the heart to a constancy, and evenness in walking with God, then the sweetness which it tastes therein: As the Gauls, when once they tasted the sweet Wine of Italy, could never be satisfied till they conquered the Country where it grew.

'Tis true, Conscience of duty may keep the heart from neglecting it, but when there is no higher Motive, it drives on deadly, and is filled with distractions; that which we delight in, we are never weary of, as is evident in the motions of the heart to earthly things, where the Wheels being oiled with delight, run nimbly, and have often need of triggings; the motions of the heart upward would be as free, if its delight in heavenly things were as great.

6. Means. *Habituate thy heart to spiritual meditations*, if thou wouldst have it freed from those burdensome diversions.

By this means you will get a facility; and dexterity in heart-work; 'tis pity those smaller portions of our time betwixt solemn duties should lie upon our hands and be rendred useless to us. O learn to save, and be good husbands upon your thoughts: To this purpose, a neat

Author speaks; "These Boyles occasi-
onal Reflects, "pen to come between
Pag. 9, 10. "the more solemn pass-
ages (whether business
or recreations) of humane life, are wont
to be lost by most men, for want of a
due value for them; and even by good
men, for want of skill to preserve them.
For though they do not properly despise
them, yet they neglect or lose them, for
want of knowing how to rescue them,
or what to do with them; but although
grains of sand, and ashes be a part, but
of a despicable smallness, and liable to
be scattered and blown away; yet the
skillful Artificer by a vehement fire,
brings numbers of these to afford him
that noble substance Glass; by whose
help

“ help, we may both see our selves, and
 “ our blemishes lively represented, (as in
 “ Looking Glasses (and discern Celestial
 “ Objects (as with *Telescopes*) and with
 “ the Sun Beams kindle disposed Materials
 “ (as with Burning Glasses,) so when
 “ these little fragments or parcels of time,
 “ which if not carefully looked to, would
 “ be dissipated and lost, come to be man-
 “ aged by a skilful Contemplator, and to
 “ be improved by the Celestial Fire of De-
 “ votion, they may be so ordered as to
 “ afford us both Looking Glasses to dress
 “ our Souls by, and Prospectives to dis-
 “ cover Heavenly wonders, and Incen-
 “ tives to inflame our hearts with zeal.
 Thus far he.

Something of that nature I have un-
 derhand, for a publick benefit; if God
 give life to finish, and opportunity to
 produce it: Certainly this is a great ad-
 vantage for the keeping of the heart. wit
 God send.

IV. Use for Consolation.

I Shall now close the whole with a word
 or two of Consolation to all diligent
 and serious Christians, that faithfully and
 closely ply heart-work; that are groaning
 and weeping in secret over the hardness,
 pride, earthliness, and vanity of their
 hearts, that are fearing and trembling
 over the experienced deceitfulness, and
 falseness of them, whilst other vain Pro-
 fessors eyes are abroad, their time and
 strength eaten up by fruitless disputes, and
 earthly employments, or at best by a cold
 and formal performance of some heart-
 less and empty duties. Poor Christian, I
 have three things to offer thee in order
 to thy support and comfort, and doubt-
 less either of them alone mixed with
 thine is sufficient to comfort thee over
 all the trouble thou hast with thine own
 heart.

1 Comfort. This argues thy heart to
 be upright and honest, what ever thy other
 gifts and abilities are.

2 Brightness of heart will comfort
 thee upon Death-bed, 2 Kings 20. 2, 3.

Then

Then he turned his face to the Wall, and prayed to the Lord, saying, Remember now O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, &c.

I am really of his mind who said, *Si mihi daretur optio eligerim Christiani rustici sordidissimum & maxime agreste opus pra omnibus victoriis & triumphis Alexandri aut Caesaris.* Might I have my wish, I would prefer the most despicable and sordid work of a rustick Christian, before all the yictories and triumphs of *Alexander* or *Cesar*. Yea, let me add, before all the elaborated duties and excellent gifts of vain Professors, before the Tongues of Men and Angels; it will signifie more to my comfort to spend one solitary hour in mourning, before the Lord over heart corruption, than many hours in a seeming zealous; but really dead performances of common duties, with the greatest enlargements and richest embellishments of parts and gifts.

By this very thing Christ distinguishes the formal and serious Christian, *Matth. 6. 5.* The one is for the Street and Synagogue, for the observation and applause of men, but the other is a Closet-man; he drives on a home trade, a heart trade: Never

Never be troubled then for the want of those things that a man may have and be eternally damned, but rather bless God for that which none but the favourites, and darlings of Heaven have: many a one is now in Hell that had a better head than thine, and many a one now in Heaven that complained of as bad an heart as thine.

2. *Com. Know farther for thy comfort, that God would never leave thee under so many heart troubles and burdens, if he intended not thy real benefit thereby.*

Thou art often crying out, Lord why is it thus, why go I mourning all the day, having sorrow in my heart, thus long I have been exercised with hardness of heart, and to this day have not obtained a broken heart; many yeares have I been praying and striving against vain thoughts, yet am still infested and perplexed with them. O when shall I get a better heart? I have been in travel, and brought forth but Wind, I have obtained no deliverance, neither have the corruptions of my heart fallen. I have brought this heart many times to prayers, Sermons, Sacraments, expecting and hoping for a cure from them, and still my sore runneth and ceaseth not.

Pensive

Pensive Soul, let this comfort thee, thy God designs thy benefit, even by these occasions of thy sad complaints? For (1) hereby he would let thee see what thy heart by Nature is, and was, and therein take notice how much thou art beholding to Free-grace: He leaves thee under these exercises of Spirit, that thou maist lie as with thy face upon the ground, admiring that ever the Lord of Glory should take such a Toad, so vile a Creature into his Bosom. Thy base heart, if it be good for nothing else, yet serves to commend and set off, the unsearchable riches of Free-grace. (2) This serves to beat thee off continually from resting, yea, or but glancing upon thine own righteousness, or excellency, the corruption of thy heart, working in all thy duties, makes thee sensible to feel that the Bed is too short, and the covering too narrow. Were it not for those reflections thou hast after duties, upon the dulness and distractions of thine heart in them; how apt wouldst thou be to fall in love with, and admire thy own performances, and enlargements? For if notwithstanding these, thou hast much to do with the pride of thy heart; how much more, if such humbling

ing and self-abasing considerations were wanting. And lastly, this tends to make thee the more compassionate and tender towards others. Perhaps thou wouldst have little pity for the distressed, and soul troubles of others, if thou hadst less experience of thine own.

Com. 3. *To conclude, God will shortly put a blessed end to all these troubles, cares, and watchings.*

The time is coming when thy heart shall be as thou wouldst have it; when thou shalt be discharged of these cares, fears, and sorrows, and never cry out: Oh my hard, my proud, my vain, my earthly heart any more; when all darkness shall be banished from thine understanding, and thou shalt clearly discover all Truths in God, that Chrystal Ocean of Truth; when all vanity shall be purged perfectly out of thy thoughts, and they be everlastingly, ravishingly, and delightfully entertained and exercised upon that supream goodness and infinite excellency of God, from whom they shall never start any more like a broken Bow. And as for thy pride, passion, earthliness, and all other the matters of thy complaint and trouble, it shall be sud of them, as of the

the Egyptians to Israel. Stand still and see the Salvation of God. These corruptions thou seest to day, henceforth thou shalt see them no more for ever; when thou shalt lay down thy Weapons of Prayers, Tears, and Groans, and put on the Armor of Light, not to fight, but to triumph in.

Lord, when shall this blessed day come? How long? how long? Holy and True; My Soul waiteth for thee. Come my Beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart upon the Mountains of *Bethers*.
Amen.

FINIS.

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